



Root cause: the signal for flowering in the thale cress *Arabidopsis* has been found to be a protein.

his lab colleagues before publication, but no one objected to the exclusion. Huang has not agreed to the retraction, calling it premature.

Nilsson's retraction was published at the same time that *Science* released the two new papers^{2,3}. Both papers — one on the thale cress *Arabidopsis* and the other on rice — report that although *FT* gene expression is restricted to the leaves, the protein can travel to the tip of the shoot. And both papers fail to find evidence for movement of *FT* RNA.

The timing of the papers, coupled with what several researchers have described as an unusually short, 40-day review, has led some to speculate that the papers were pushed to publication more quickly to coincide with the retraction. But Katrina Kelner, *Science's* deputy editor for life sciences, says the review period was not abbreviated. "It was sensible to have them come out at the same time for maximum clarity of the literature," she says. "We coordinated them, but the review process of those two papers was in no way abnormal."

The new work comes with its own share of caveats. Both groups rely on commonly used but indirect measures of protein movement, and some researchers have pointed out that key controls are lacking.

Overall, however, many experts say the new papers are convincing. "None of these is really the killer experiment," says Detlef Weigel of the Max Planck Institute for Developmental Biology in Tübingen, Germany. "But I would say the overwhelming evidence is that the protein moves." Zeevaert goes even further. "The problem is solved," he says.

But with a history as chequered as *florigen's*, not everyone is ready to close the book. "It's always good to be cautious," says Colasanti, "especially in this field." ■

Heidi Ledford

1. Huang, T. *et al. Science* **309**, 1694–1696 (2005).
2. Tamaki, S. *et al. Science* doi:10.1126/science.114753 (2007).
3. Corbesier, L. *et al. Science* doi:10.1126/science.114752 (2007).

month in the journal *Brain* (N. F. Dronkers, O. Plaisant, M. T. Iba-Zizen and E. A. Cabanis *Brain* doi:10.1093/brain/awm042; 2007).

This misplaced focus could lead to problems when diagnosing people with language impairments, says

Dronkers. By assuming that only one small area of the brain is responsible for language, clinicians might overlook other regions involved in speech production. In other words, focusing too heavily on Broca's area could be missing the point, Dronkers argues.

Others agree. "There's a tendency for researchers to see activation in somewhere like Broca's area and to say 'oh well, we're tapping into a language area'," says Joseph Devlin, a neuroscientist at the University of Oxford, UK, who images language networks in the brain.

Newer imaging techniques may also help researchers to discover what Broca was unable to see. Dronkers and Devlin are both working on the use of alternative imaging techniques to investigate other regions of the brain that may be important in language processing but which are not detected by magnetic resonance imaging, such as the tracts of white matter that connect areas of grey matter. ■

Kerri Smith



The brain of Lelong, one of Broca's patients, about to be scanned.

ZOO NEWS

Puppy love

Researchers at Seoul National University in South Korea will this year mate Snuppy, the world's first cloned dog (right), with Bona, the world's second (and first female) clone, to check their reproductive abilities.



REUTERS/SEOUL NAT'L UNIV.

NUMBER CRUNCH

US\$421,200 was the amount paid at auction last week for the skeleton of a mammoth nicknamed 'The President' — a record for such an artefact.

11 other items in the same sale of palaeontological curiosities, which was held at Christie's in Paris, France, were also sold for world-record prices.

US\$1.53 million is the total amount of cash splashed out at the auction, mostly by private collectors.

ON THE RECORD

“This proves it's possible for humans to change the weather on the world's highest plateau.”

Yu Zhongshui, an official at China's Tibet meteorological station, on the successful effort to create snowfall over the city of Nagqu by seeding clouds with silver iodide particles.

OVERHYPED

Kryptonite

The name of Superman's nemesis has been given to the newly discovered mineral sodium lithium boron silicate hydroxide, because it happens to have a very similar name to the formulation for kryptonite quoted in the film *Superman Returns*. The real-life version, however, is not green, does not come from outer space and can't kill superheroes.

Sources: AFP, Associated Press, Daily Telegraph, Natural History Museum