



STEM CELLS HELP PRIMATES WITH PARKINSON'S
 Monkey studies highlight multiple stem-cell abilities.
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D. MACK/SPL



C. SUZUKI/AP

Biological engineer James Sherley claims racial discrimination cost him tenure at MIT.

a committee of senior faculty members, who were approved by Sherley, is sufficient.

His complaints have triggered one change, though: after the hunger strike, MIT announced a new initiative on race. It includes a study modelled on the 1999 investigation led by Hopkins on female scientists, and aims to quantify differences such as salary, lab space and the time between tenure and promotion to full professor. The study is due to be completed in September 2008.

For Sherley, the results will come too late. "His term as a member of the faculty ends on 30 June," says MIT chancellor Phillip Clay. "The review process is complete." ■

Heidi Ledford

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Stem-cell paper corrected

The authors of a controversial paper on stem cells publish a correction of their work in this week's issue of *Nature* (see page 880), but say their overall conclusions still stand.

The paper in question, published in 2002, claimed to find evidence for so-called 'multipotent adult progenitor cells', or MAPCs, in mouse bone marrow (Y. Jiang *et al. Nature* 418, 41-49; 2002). The work was led by Catherine Verfaillie, now director of the Stem Cell Institute at the Catholic University of Leuven, in Belgium.

The correction states that figures showing proteins on the surface of the MAPCs contained many errors, including duplications. Verfaillie's group provides replacement data and says that the correction does not undermine the paper's conclusion that MAPCs can give rise to a wide range of different cell types.

The paper challenged the prevailing idea that only stem cells derived from embryos were highly flexible. Some of its results have been reproduced by other labs, but no one has been able to replicate the work independently in its entirety.

"I believe that despite the hype over the mistake, we and *Nature* made the conclusion that the final findings of the paper still stand," says Verfaillie.

This February, an investigation convened by the University of Minnesota — Verfaillie's former institution — found that her group had used incorrect procedures in the *Nature* paper, and that some of the data contained in it might be flawed. The investigation was a response to questions from a reporter from the magazine *New Scientist*, who pointed out that the figure corrected today was partly reproduced with different labels in another paper in the journal *Experimental Hematology* (Y. Jiang *et al. Exp. Hematol.* 30, 896-904; 2002).

In response to the investigation, *Nature*

convened a peer-review panel to analyse the data from the 2002 paper. According to *Nature*, the experts concluded that although the figure data were flawed, the paper's conclusions are still valid.

No allegations of fraud or misconduct have been levelled at Verfaillie or anyone from her group. There are still two investigations ongoing — one at the University of Minnesota and one at the Catholic University of Leuven — into a second set of allegations raised by *New Scientist*. These concern data from a paper in the journal *Blood* (M. Reyes *et al. Blood* 98, 2615-2625; 2001) and data in a US patent filing.

Verfaillie says her group cannot explain how the errors in the *Nature* paper occurred: "Why this happened, we have not been able to determine," she says. ■

Erika Check



A. KING/AP

Catherine Verfaillie defends her team's work.

funding agencies, now must winnow out those projects to be built from those to be abandoned. This October, they will announce which projects on the list will receive initial funding for technical design studies; an updated roadmap is to be produced by autumn 2008. Projects that are chosen for funding will require one country to take the lead, as Germany has done for the XFEL and the icebreaker.

But even that can be tricky, as negotiating the details of multinational EU projects is a notoriously cumbersome process. Building the XFEL, for example, required separate bilateral agreements between Germany and all the 12 other participating countries. And although Germany had said early on that it would cover 60% of the building costs and 75% of the operational costs, it took almost four years to finalize

agreements with all partners.

The money must come from some extra pot, as the EU's seventh Framework programme for research, which runs from 2007 to 2013, has only an embryonic budget for infrastructures — just enough to fund design studies and facilitate access to existing machines. Peter Tindemans, who chairs the ESS initiative, suggests that a fraction of the EU's overall budget surplus, some

€3 billion to €4 billion each year, should be put aside for funding research facilities. That's twice the current EU spending on infrastructures, and roughly equal to US spending.

"The ministers say research infrastructures are an area where Europe needs to act as a union," says Tindemans. "Let's remind them of their promise to put their money where their mouth is." ■

Quirin Schiermeier