Thinking big for cancer research

The mouse remains an invaluable little workhorse to cancer researchers, and there are increasingly sophisticated ways to model different types of cancer in the animal. But moving from bench to bedside, what's observed in the mouse doesn't always translate to the patient. A growing community of researchers is starting to think bigger.

Proponents of the pig say that adding swine to the preclinical pipeline could help cancer research advance. It's a big undertaking to adopt such a big animal as a model organism, but the pig's anatomical, physiological, and genetic similarity to humans make it a promising step between mouse and man. Read more about pig models of cancer in our March feature.

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Views on diversity in neurodegenerative disease

Alzheimer's disease is a devastating neurodegenerative condition with considerable complexity. There is not a clear-cut cause, but there are a diverse number of genes that seem to correlate with susceptibility, and resistance, to developing the disease. Perhaps the animal models used should try to capture that diversity too? Alzheimer's researchers Katherine Sadleir and Robert Vassar from Northwestern University offer their views on a recent paper that introduces variability to Alzheimer's disease mouse models in a new News & Views recap.

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