Primate data is better together

Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) offers a non-invasive way to look at the brains of both humans and laboratory animals. Whereas those who work with small animals, such as mice and rats, have ready access to specialized MRI equipment optimized to fit their animals, the nonhuman primate field must often make due with machines designed for humans. Accommodating the size difference means tweaking data acquisition and analysis pipelines, with each facility often making their own modifications.

To make the most of precious nonhuman primate neuroimaging data, it may be time for the field to come together. Taking cues from initiatives to standardize and to share human data, a growing group in the nonhuman primate community is working to follow suit. Read more about neuroimaging in the nonhuman primate field and its data sharing efforts in this month's Technology Feature.

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What's lurking in that strain?

Different mouse strains come with their own advantages—and disadvantages—for particular research questions. To fully understand a phenotype when you make a mouse with mutant alleles, you need to fully understand the strain that you are using. Nuance lurks in those genomes, and a mutation made on one strain background can differ greatly from one made another.

The May Know Your Model Comment details several different sources of strain-specific genetic contributions that can skew phenotype interpretation, along with several resources to help you avoid strain-related pitfalls.

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