UC Center for Lab Safety, BioRAFT, and Nature Publishing Group Launch Survey to Study Laboratory Safety

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The international Laboratory Safety Culture Survey will gather data on researchers' safety practices and attitudes; information to provide guidance for future safety policies and procedures

The University of California Center for Laboratory Safety, BioRAFT, and Nature Publishing Group have joined forces to launch an international survey to identify issues impacting laboratory safety. The survey invites tens of thousands of researchers to anonymously answer questions about lab safety practices and attitudes. The results will provide information needed to design policies and lab safety programs that protect researchers from harm without unduly impacting their work, that reduce institutional risk, and that can be used to develop software solutions that ease compliance oversight and management.

The survey asks questions about types of materials used in research, training practices and policies, and attitudes and beliefs about existing safety practices and their impact on research. Researchers who do not receive a direct invitation are encouraged to complete the survey at **go.nature.com/7LDJlI**. Institution leaders who wish to contribute are urged to distribute this press release to their research community.

Laboratory safety practices are coming under increased scrutiny following several accidents that have resulted in injuries or death. Many institutions implement or alter policies with the intent of improving laboratory safety, but without independent evidence and an understanding of existing culture, they cannot ensure that they are achieving the desired results. This survey is the first step to gather data required to study these issues more closely, and to better understand the reality of modern-day lab safety from the perspective of the researcher.

The survey builds off of existing work and interest of each of the collaborators:

The UC Center for Laboratory Safety hopes the project will further its data-driven mission of improving safety. "This survey is a vitally important undertaking that will help us understand how researchers all across the globe approach lab safety," says James Gibson, Executive Director of the UC Center for Laboratory Safety and Director of UCLA's Office of Environment, Health & Safety. "This goes to the very heart of what our organization does – utilizing scientific methods to gather data that will be analyzed and ultimately help us understand how to make our labs even safer. We're very proud to be working with our partners at BioRAFT and Nature Publishing Group on this important project."

BioRAFT joins the other partners on the survey to better understand how to strengthen its laboratory safety and compliance management software solutions for researchers and institutions. BioRAFT recently received an investment from Digital Science, the sister company of survey partner Nature Publishing Group, to support its work. "Many people involved in research are talking about poor 'lab safety culture', but the reality is that we have little actual knowledge about the causes," says Nathan Watson, President and CEO of BioRAFT. "We need this research to better understand the variables, and improve workflows that help researchers focus on their research in a safe work environment rather than on navigating a lab safety and regulatory compliance matrix of requirements."

Nature Publishing Group, a leader in providing scientific research information, is partnering with BioRAFT and UC Center for Lab Safety on this survey project as a service to the community of scientific and medical researchers. "The work done in research laboratories is vital to every aspect of society, so we must find new and better ways to protect researchers from harm without unduly complicating their efforts," says Dan Penny, Head of Business Development, Nature Publishing Group. "We support this survey project because its substantial size and neutral methodology will provide an excellent opportunity to understand how best to improve laboratory safety."

About the UC Center for Laboratory Safety

The UC Center for Laboratory Safety was created to improve safety through scientific research and implementation of best safety practices in laboratories at universities and research organizations. The Center operates under the oversight of the UC Center for Laboratory Safety Advisory Board with technical support from the UCLA Office of Environment, Health and Safety. For more information, visit **http://cls.ucla.edu/index.html**.

About BioRAFT

The BioRAFT suite of research management software modules significantly improves laboratory safety, compliance processes, researcher productivity, and management oversight. BioRAFT enables researchers to focus on their research by managing compliance for training, biosafety, hazardous chemicals, radiation management, MSDS, and other laboratory safety

requirements. BioRAFT has secured an investment from Digital Science, a new technology company out of Macmillan Publishers Ltd. For more information, visit **www.BioRAFT.com**

About Nature Publishing Group (NPG)

Nature Publishing Group (NPG) is a publisher of high impact scientific and medical information in print and online. NPG publishes journals, online databases and services across the life, physical, chemical and applied sciences and clinical medicine. For more information, visit **www.nature.com/npg_/company_info/index.html**.

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