

Conversion of human fibroblasts into functional cardiomyocytes by small molecules.

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Funding Grants: A new paradigm of lineage-specific reprogramming

Public Summary:

Reprogramming somatic fibroblasts into alternative lineages would provide a promising source of cells for regenerative therapy. However, transdifferentiating human cells into specific homogeneous, functional cell types is challenging. Here we show that cardiomyocyte-like cells can be generated by treating human fibroblasts with a combination of nine compounds that we term gC. The chemically induced cardiomyocyte-like cells uniformly contracted and resembled human cardiomyocytes in their transcriptome, epigenetic, and electrophysiological properties. gC treatment of human fibroblasts resulted in a more open-chromatin conformation at key heart developmental genes, enabling their promoters and enhancers to bind effectors of major cardiogenic signals. When transplanted into infarcted mouse hearts, gC-treated fibroblasts were efficiently converted to chemically induced cardiomyocyte-like cells. This pharmacological approach to lineage-specific reprogramming may have many important therapeutic implications after further optimization to generate mature cardiac cells.

Scientific Abstract:

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