

Genetic Molecule Enables Safer Method For Creating IPS Cells

Researchers funded by CIRM developed a novel way of generating induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells. The technique involves a genetic molecule called a microRNA to activate genes required to reprogram the adult cell to a state similar to an embryonic stem cell. The authors think microRNAs could make existing methods for creating those cells – either with inserted DNA or chemical baths – more efficient, and could also prevent the reprogramming that takes place when a normal cell becomes cancerous. The lead author, Robert Judson, is a graduate student in the lab of Robert Blelloch, who has CIRM grants (New Faculty II and SEED) to study the role of microRNAs in stem cells.

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