Hopes and fears surround new induced stem cell method

Two papers published in Nature on January 30 describe a new and remarkably simple technique for generating pluripotent cells: cells that can develop into many different kinds of cells. From the abstract of the first paper, by Haruko Obokata, Charles Vacanti and six colleagues:

Here we report a unique cellular reprogramming phenomenon, called stimulus-triggered acquisition of pluripotency (STAP), which requires neither nuclear transfer nor the introduction of transcription factors. In STAP, strong external stimuli such as a transient low-pH stressor reprogrammed mammalian somatic cells, resulting in the generation of pluripotent cells.

The work was done on mice, but only a week later a photo was released apparently showing human STAP cells. This extension has not been peer reviewed but if confirmed “could be a paradigm changer,” according to Robert Lanza.

Read the full, original story: Are STAP Stem Cells a Paradigm Changer? Hopes and Fears