

Mature cells are flexible, able to change type

In 1998, University of Bath biologist David Tosh had a eureka moment. He noticed that some of the rat pancreatic exocrine cells he was working with had become unusually large and flat. The cells, which belonged to an established line called AR42j, were no longer pancreatic cells at all; they were hepatocytes, the principal cell type of the liver. The cells had changed their identity simply under the influence of the synthetic hormone dexamethasone, which had been added to the medium to enhance endocrine cell secretions.

This wasn't the first demonstration that cells could change type. Indeed, in the past two decades, the study of cellular reprogramming has gone from basic science to applied bioengineering, with researchers now able to create a variety of important cell types.

Read the full, original story: [A Twist of Fate](#)