

Controversial stem cell papers finally, officially retracted

Following months of controversy, editors at the scientific journal Nature have retracted two high-profile studies that purported to demonstrate a quick and simple way of making flexible stem cells without destroying embryos or tinkering with DNA.

“Several critical errors have been found in our Article and Letter,” Nature wrote in a retraction statement issued Wednesday. “We apologize for the mistakes.”

The two reports described a new way of reprogramming blood cells so that they would revert to a developmentally primitive state and be capable of growing into any type of cell. Researchers from Japan and the United States said they accomplished this feat by soaking the cells in an acid bath for 30 minutes and then spinning them in a centrifuge for 5 minutes.

Scientists in the field of regenerative medicine were giddy at the prospect of using the cells to grow new insulin-producing cells for people with Type 1 diabetes or central nervous system cells for people with spinal cord injuries, to name a few examples.

But it didn't take long for some researchers to suspect that STAP stem cells were too good to be true. Critiques posted online gained more currency when labs began reporting that they weren't able to replicate the experiments. Then one of the senior researchers who worked on both of the studies called for the papers to be withdrawn until the results could be independently verified.

Read the full, original story: [Nature retracts STAP stem cell studies after finding more errors](#)