‘Perfect’ replicas of human blood vessels grown in lab

An international team of scientists claim to have pulled off a first: Three-dimensional replicas of human blood vessels that are grown in a petri dish. The trippy accomplishment, detailed in a new paper out [January 16] in Nature, will hopefully let us better understand and study crippling diseases like diabetes.

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Ideally, you’d want to see the effects of any disease on something resembling humans as closely as possible. Tiny lab-grown organs, or organoids as scientists call them, have emerged in recent years as a tantalizing option to do just that. Up until now though, the researchers behind the current study say, we hadn’t truly recreated human blood vessels in the lab. But the ones made by this research team are “perfect,” according to a University of British Columbia press release.

“Our organoids resemble human capillaries to a great extent, even on a molecular level, and we can now use them to study blood vessel diseases directly on human tissue,” lead author Reimer Wimmer,

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Blood vessels are only the latest frontier in organoid development. Scientists have already created miniature versions of a stomach, lungs, and even developing brain. These organoids have been used to study the effects of everything from cystic fibrosis to the Zika virus.

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