

## Challenging Nature's decision to run a stem cell advertisement portrayed as research

Readers of Nature, one of the world's most important scientific journals, might have been struck recently by an audacious claim appearing on its website about a possible stem cell treatment for heart attacks.

The published item asserted that MUSE cells, a subset of stem cells, could regenerate heart tissue after acute myocardial infarctions, which are deadly sudden heart attacks. This could be a significant advance in both cardiac treatment and the use of stem cells.

Here's the problem. The published item wasn't a peer-reviewed article subject to Nature's rigorous professional vetting procedure. It was an advertisement.

Image credit: Nature/unknown

Advertising, or the real thing? A stem cell researcher thought this ad in Nature could be mistaken for a peer-reviewed article. Nature removed the ad. Image credit: Nature/Knoepfler

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After [stem cell expert Paul] Knoepfler's inquiry, the journal said, "we reviewed the ad and determined that it didn't fully meet the guidelines we set ourselves for paid content" and removed it. Nature told Knoepfler that such advertising material wasn't subject to indexing for scholarly databases and therefore wouldn't penetrate the research mainstream.

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"How can a research article be an advertisement?" Knoepfler asked on his blog. "I don't think it should be possible. The field of science doesn't need to blur the line between research articles and ads."

**Read full, original post:** [Did a world-famous science journal become a shill for a questionable stem cell claim?](#)