

March 11, 2014

President's Statement: Further Request regarding Response to STAP Cell Papers

The Molecular Biology Society of Japan (MBSJ) is greatly concerned about the recent problems regarding STAP cell papers published in the scientific journal *Nature*. As you are aware, in a President's Statement issued on March 3, we requested RIKEN to respond to this problem in order to provide a criterion for the future.

Subsequent to that request, some of the authors of the above-mentioned papers published details of their experimental methods on March 5. However, the contents of their statements had the effect of casting further doubt on the conclusions of the papers in question. This has led to considerable confusion not only in the research community but also in society at large over the past few days. Against this background, one of the co-authors, Professor Teruhiko Wakayama of the University of Yamanashi, made a statement on March 10 to the effect that he could not be absolutely certain of the existence of STAP cells.

The correctness of a scientific thesis is verified on the basis of the results of experiments. Unfortunately, in view of the many defects in the data itself in the papers in question, it cannot be said that the conclusions are sufficiently proved based on scientific facts. Furthermore, the many deliberate alterations clearly go beyond the possibility that the authors merely made mistakes and have raised doubts among many scientists. We fully understand the importance of this research and, regardless of the question of the repeatability of the results, strongly request an appropriate response regarding these papers.

The MBSJ strongly requests that RIKEN takes the following measures. We believe that such a response will not only ensure the propriety of research and lead to further progress of life sciences in Japan, but also serve as a criterion for the future.

1. Prompt and complete disclosure of the raw data used in the two papers in *Nature* (*Nature* 505, pp. 641-647, 2014; *Nature* 505, pp. 676-680, 2014) and a swift and

- appropriate response regarding the papers (including withdrawal, resubmission)
- 2. A detailed inquiry into the causes of the circumstances leading to doubt being cast on the propriety of this research and publication of a report of the results of this inquiry

The MBSJ does not view this as an isolated case. We are paying close attention to this problem and similar cases in the past, with both introspection and self-reproach, as an urgent issue inherent in research and the environment in which scientists work. By studying various matters, including future reports, we researchers will make every effort to get a clearer grasp of the issue of the propriety and ethics of research, study it carefully, and make improvements to the system. We undertake to strive even harder to ensure that we publish responsible and sound research results.

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President
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