

# The New York Times

Submitted to the New York Times

September 16, 2014

To the Editor:

Contrary to the message in the article today headlined “Stem Cells: Plenty of Hope, but Halting Progress,” (Science Times, September 16) stem cell research is making huge strides towards bringing us closer to the clinical treatments we have all been waiting for. At The New York Stem Cell Foundation Research Institute (NYSCF), we recently used stem cells to discover a therapy that prevents the transmission of devastating mitochondrial diseases. Indeed, this important discovery, which is expected to begin patient trials in Britain early next year, was featured on the cover of The New York Times Sunday Magazine just three months ago, on June 29th.

The spectacular picture from the NYSCF Lab included with this article further disproved the thesis of the article, since the image was of a stem cell from a woman with type one diabetes, an important step toward the treatment of diabetes, developed by NYSCF scientists.

NYSCF is also working with the Michael J. Fox Foundation’s supported Parkinson's Progression Marker's Initiative to make stem cell lines and models of Parkinson’s Disease from over 700 genetically diverse patients which will we use to identify drugs that will stop the progression of Parkinson’s in those with the genetic markers for the disease, which is hardly pulling away from stem cell research, as your article states.

And, NYSCF is providing critical support for the seminal work being done on ALS, by NYSCF Scientist Kevin Eggan at the Harvard Stem Cell Institute, and this work is moving rapidly toward the development of new drugs and new cocktails of existing drugs for ALS that we expect will be used in clinical trials within the coming year.

Stem cell research is a new field: the first human embryonic stem cells were isolated in 1998, just sixteen years ago. Serious medical research is not a fad, but a long and challenging road, and its advocates have never believed that it would bear fruit quickly. The New York Stem Cell Foundation has twice helped to bring about what has been lauded as the number one medical breakthrough of the year just this past decade. I would hardly call that “halting progress.”

Sincerely,

Susan L. Solomon  
Chief Executive Officer  
The New York Stem Cell Foundation