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### Contaminating Hamster Cells

The *Bulletin* of the Tissue Culture Association (September, 1967) lists several "Catastrophies in the tissue culture laboratory." I should like to call attention to our mistaken observation of "enhanced growth of human embryonic cells infected with adenovirus 12" (1).

The inadvertent presence of some contaminating hamster cells in cultures from the same human embryo received months apart was responsible ultimately for this "enhanced growth." A similar culture purchased from the same source but derived from a different embryo did not develop accelerated growth. It became clear that a few contaminating cells were transformed in the presence of virus and eventually replaced the human cell population as the latter was less resistant to killing. Identification of the hamster cells was by immunologic and karyotypic studies and by animal inoculation.

In order to test for the possibility that some of the human cells might have been similarly affected, a culture taken soon after infection was passaged under conditions designed to suppress or to eliminate hamster cells immunologically. At least some cells produced virus continuously and many contained T antigen. Growth was very slow and the effort was discontinued after 2 years.

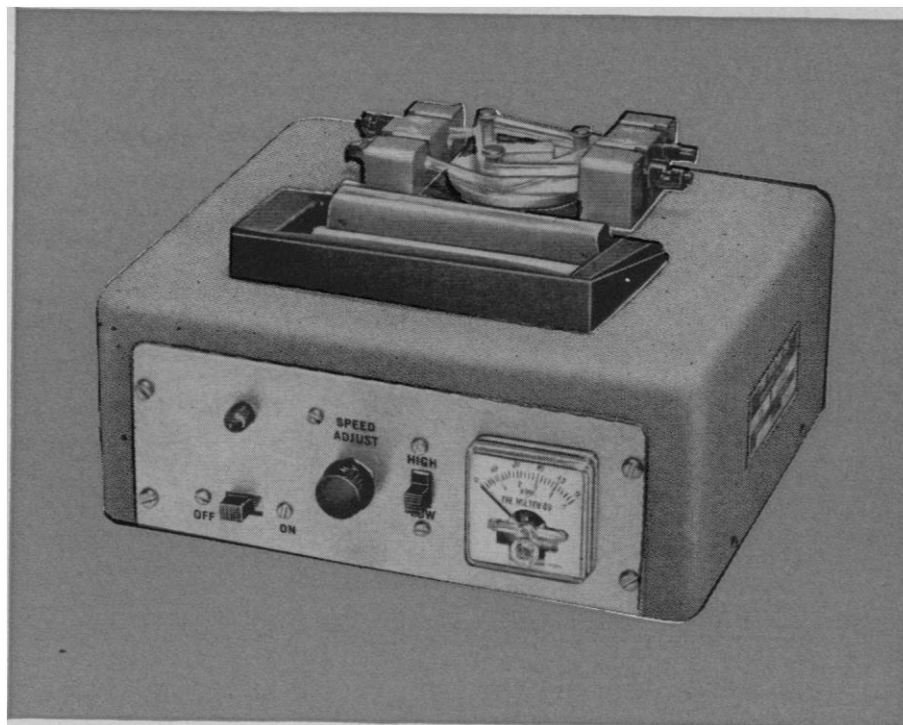
Although the source of the contaminating hamster cells was not rigorously established, attention is called again to the hazard of taking for granted the expected purity of species in cell cultures of this description.

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#### Reference

1. I. V. Sultanian and G. Freeman, *Science* **154**, 665 (1966).



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