

Openness in Private-Public Collaboration

As a long-time champion of private-public collaboration, I was pleased to read Eliot Marshall's article "Drug firms to create public database of genetic mutations" (News of the Week, 16 Apr., p. 406). The new initiative is a laudable effort in many ways and an example of the kind of initiative needed to address human health issues of concern to all sectors of society.

Marshall notes the open nature of the effort, which was appropriately viewed by some scientists as a "new model" of public-private collaboration and viewed by some as "absolutely unique." A similar mode of an "open nature" that was initiated in 1976 and continues today involves the Chemical Industry Institute of Toxicology (CIIT). CIIT is a not-for-profit research institute supported principally by dues payments made by more than 30 private companies in the chemical sector. The founding Board of Directors of CIIT wisely put in place operation guidelines calling for all research findings to be analyzed and prepared for publication in a timely manner, irrespective of potential impact on the industry. In addition, the board speci-

fied that all manuscripts should be subjected to rigorous internal peer review and submitted to high-quality, peer-reviewed journals. And, most important, in the same manner now being advocated for the new genomic initiative, the results were to be disseminated broadly to all interested parties without giving preference to the sponsors. This open communication of research findings has been the key to CIIT's achievement of a high level of scientific credibility. As a result, the institute's research results are widely used around the world in regulatory proceedings and in nonregulated voluntary actions to limit human health risks of chemicals.

The high level of credibility of the institute has led to the use of CIIT as a cornerstone for an expanded health and environmental research initiative supported through the Chemical Manufacturers Association (CMA) by more than 190 chemical companies. The CMA leadership has adopted the CIIT practices of peer review, complete public disclosure, and availability of results to all interested parties. These policies are essential for the credibility of private-public collaborations in a society that is frequently skeptical of private, and for that matter, government endeavors.

Good business sense and the common good can both be served in advancing science and human health when openness is used to counter skepticism.

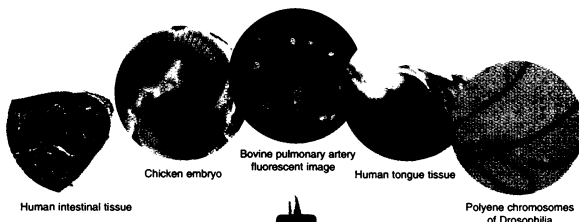
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Brain Regions and Drug Addiction

Robert F. Service reports on an interesting study by Astrid Nehlig and her colleagues at the recent American Chemical Society meeting (News Focus, 9 Apr., p. 244). Nehlig and her colleagues found that caffeine does not result in increased blood flow to the nucleus accumbens, a brain area known to be involved in many drugs of abuse. In contrast, she found increased blood flow to the caudate-putamen. These results fit well with studies showing that caffeine induces expression of the activity-dependent gene *c-Fos* in the caudate-putamen, with little activation in the nucleus accumbens (1). However, a lack of activity in the nucleus accumbens does not indicate that the drug is not addictive. Several other brain regions, including the caudate-putamen, have been linked to drug addiction. Moreover, all drugs of abuse that have been

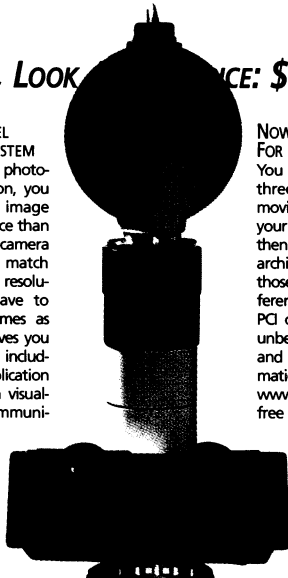
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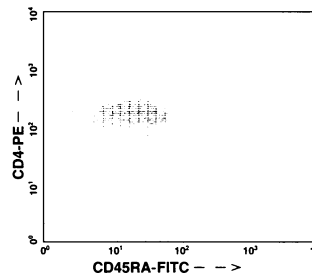
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