Response

MARKUS AND FINCHAM RAISE AN IMPORTANT issue regarding HIV vaccine trials in Africa. Although currently there is no data to support their concern, it certainly warrants investigation, given the potential scope of the problem. A possible solution to this problem might be to coadminister cytokines such as IL-2 or IL-12 with candidate HIV vaccines to drive the vaccine-elicited T_H1 immune responses, perhaps by using a protocol similar to the one we reported in our research article.

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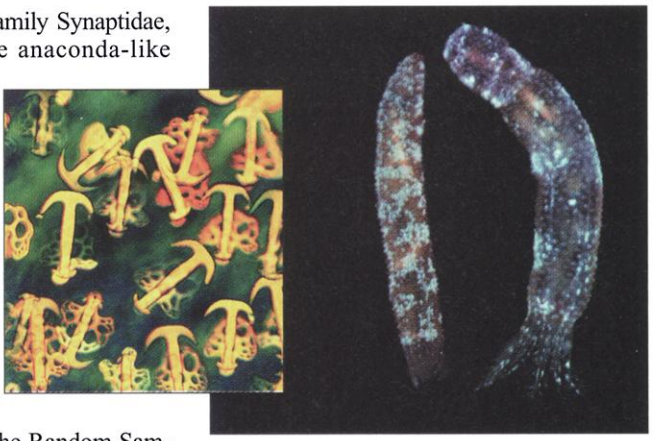
That's No Worm...

THE NAME "MEDUSA WORM" THAT IS USED to describe a prize-winning photo in the Random Samples item "Micro cosmos" (24 Nov., p. 1495) is aquarium trade jargon that obscures the identity and attributes of the organism photographed. The organism is a holothuroid (sea cucumber), a member of the singularly interesting family Synaptidae, some of which reach the anaconda-like length of 5 meters. The individuals pictured here are *Synaptula hydriformis* (*1*), typically a few centimeters in length. This species is probably a self-fertilizing hermaphrodite. Viviparous, matrotrophic individuals brood more than 200 embryos at a time in their body cavities. The microscopic objets d'art pictured in the Random Samples item (and here) are not "actually the skin," as stated, but the skeleton, composed of microscopic ossicles that lie within the sea cucumber integument. Moreover, the "fanciful mushroom designs" mentioned in the account are the aptly termed anchor ossicles articulating on their supporting plates. Unique to synaptids, anchor ossicles stand in for adhesive tube feet that are completely lacking in the group. The hooked anchors, present in densities up to 1500 per centimeter, provide extraordinary gripping power. Protruding and retracting in the skin as peristaltic waves traverse the sea cucumber's body wall, they create the traction required for locomotion.



Microscopic anchor-shaped bones (insert) embedded in the sea cucumber's skin serve in locomotion.

CREDIT: (LEFT) C. GAUTIER; (RIGHT) G. HENDLER

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References
1. The image is adapted from figure 176 in G. Hendler, *et al.*, *Sea Stars, Sea Urchins, and Allies, Echinoderms of Florida and the Caribbean* (Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC, 1995).