

## Forum for Agricultural Biotechnology Debates

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### References and Notes

1. R. A. Cherny *et al.*, *Neuron* **30**, 665 (2001).
2. C. C. Curtain *et al.*, *J. Biol. Chem.*, in press.
3. F. Clifford Rose, M. Gawel, *Acta Neurol. Scand. Suppl.* **100**, 137 (1984); T. W. Meade, *Br. J. Prev. Soc. Med.* **29**, 157 (1975).
4. G. Baumgartner *et al.*, *J. Neurol. Neurosurg. Psychiatr.* **42**, 1073 (1979).
5. K. Nakae, S. Yamamoto, I. Shigematsu, R. Kono, *Lancet* **1**, 171 (1973).
6. M. Yassin *et al.*, *J. Neurol. Sci.* **173**, 40 (2000).
7. We have carefully reviewed the literature on the association between CQ and SMON. A summary of our findings on the matter forms the basis of a discussion in (7), which is the basis for our discussion here. The institutional review board of the Royal Melbourne Hospital (responsible for overseeing the phase II clinical trial that is under way) has reviewed and accepted our argument for why CQ, at low doses, would be safe to administer to patients in the trial. Similarly, scientific reviewers of the Alzheimer's Association of America have examined the evidence and the clinical trial protocol, and they have supported this trial. Our study participants are also reviewed by neurologists at regular intervals, and they have regular tests to identify subclinical signs of SMON, including nerve conduction studies. The clinical trial is sponsored in part by Prana Biotechnology Ltd., in which both authors are shareholders and consultants.

**THE STATEMENT THAT THE STANDING** committee on agricultural biotechnology of the National Academy of Sciences "is expected to launch a study of the ecological risks of trees, grasses, and ornamental shrubs" in Jocelyn Kaiser's News Focus article "Words (and axes) fly over transgenic trees" (6 Apr., p. 34) is incorrect. Although issues raised by the development of transgenic trees are of great interest to the Committee on Agricultural Biotechnology, Health and the Environment (CABHE), we are not on the verge of launching such a study and could not pursue such issues until appropriate new resources are identified.

CABHE is a relatively new standing committee of the National Research Council. Composed of experts in biological and social sciences and in public policy, CABHE has been formed to address several important aspects of agricultural biotechnology, such as health-related and environmental consequences of using biotechnology for production of fiber and food (both plant and animal). Thus far, with support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and

Drug Administration, CABHE has been involved in planning and overseeing studies of animal biotechnology and of environmental risk assessment for transgenic crops, attempting to bring a diversity of viewpoints to the polarized debates about these issues. Summaries of CABHE activities appear on the project's Web site at <http://www.nationalacademies.org/agbiotech>.

**HAROLD VARMUS, BARBARA SCHAAL\***

Co-chairs, Committee on Agricultural Biotechnology, Health and the Environment

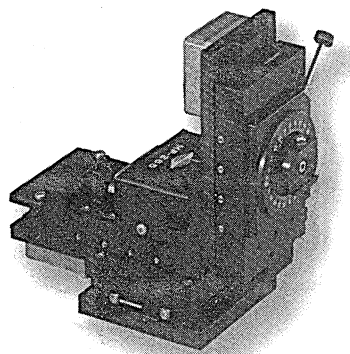
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### CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

**LETTERS:** "Human origins and ancient human DNA" by A. Cooper *et al.*, Response by G. J. Adcock *et al.* (1 Jun., p. 1655). In their letter, Cooper *et al.* described an error in a table in G. J. Adcock *et al.*, *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A.* **98**, 537 (2001). This information, however, was received too late in the publication process to include a response by Adcock *et al.* Their response is as follows: "Cooper *et al.* correctly point out that column 199 in our Table 1 is incorrectly marked as parsimoniously informative. This error is due to a copy-and-paste error and does not affect the remaining phylogenetic analyses."

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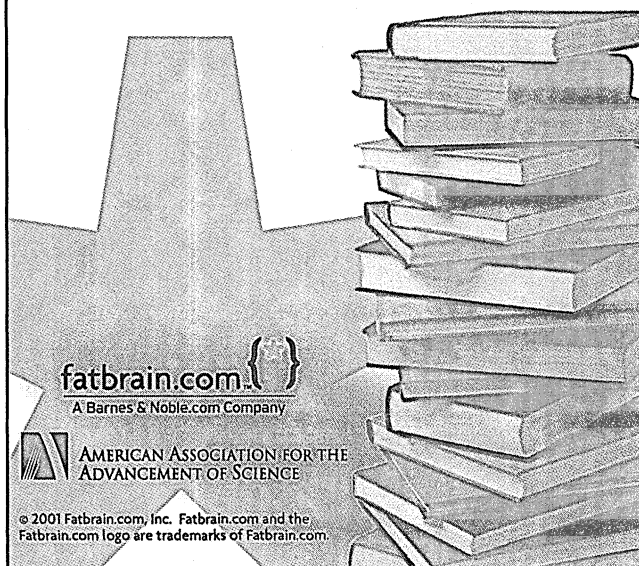


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