Those Brain Motility Blues

by strannikov

Dr. Schatz began perspiring visibly as he read the data summary on his screen. His colleague, Dr. Carne, sat on the other side of the desk drumming fingers on both arms of his chair.

"Well, shit!" Schatz exploded.

"Not the apt response to these data," Carne objected. "You know this only confirms the analysis that Rumen and Ventral prepared last week."

Schatz had been holding his head in both hands as he scanned the data summary, now his hands slid down and off his face. "Can't we just suspend their trials for now?"

"We'll lose every dime of funding if we don't find some way to challenge their findings. Depthford thinks we should arrange a plane accident for Rumen and Ventral on their way to the conference."

Schatz planted his elbows on his desk, cradled his face in his hands, and regained his composure. "While I'm tempted to agree, I wonder whether some fatal something else might not look less obvious."

Dr. Carne needed no other instruction. He lifted himself from his chair and was out of the office by the time Dr. Schatz's eyes returned to his screen.

Stem cell technology had come a long way, and if Doctors Schatz and Carne had anything to do with it, it would go much further, with their names prominently displayed in all subsequent editions of the annals of medical science.

Five years earlier Schatz and Carne had discovered the unique properties of stem cells found to flourish in the lining of the duodenum, the very idea of which had been pooh-poohed for most of the preceding two decades but which their new extraction technique permitted them to confirm.

Their early research showed duodenal stem cells to have two remarkable properties. First, they had a nasty habit of migrating after implantation for tissue generation, but this was soon compensated for and corrected by topical applications of KCUF-polyphase solutions at the time of surgical implantation. The other remarkable property of duodenal stem cells was their ready ability to grow brain tissue, localized to the requirements of the synaptic and neuronal functions of specific regions of the subject brain, no matter what part of the brain benefitted from the implantation. Demonstrable cognitive enhancements resulting from DSC implantation were duly noted in early research, and within three years of Schatz and Carne's clinical breakthroughs, elective DSC implants were being requested by and performed for elites in government, entertainment, journalism, business, science, and philosophy the world over.

Schatz and Carne's pioneering research in both DSC extraction and implantation, while not earning them jointly a Nobel in Physiology and Medicine right away, did help them gain hundreds of millions in public funding and private investment in the year following their announcement of their perfected extraction and implantation techniques. Their university research facility became the world center of DSC clinical therapies.

Recent studies conducted at the DSC Clinical Research Institute by junior researchers Rumen and Ventral threatened to undo all that Schatz and Carne had achieved, however.

While DSC migration had been addressed satisfactorily by the Schatz and Carne KCUF-polyphase technique, Rumen and Ventral had begun reporting internally their troubling findings which suggested that a reversion of duodenal stem cells to duodenal functionality was being facilitated somehow by the very technique that had made successful DSC implantation possible.

Rumen and Ventral's research was beginning to reveal, that is, that subjects who had benefitted from successful cranial implantation of duodenal stem cells were becoming prone to

developing a new and markedly debilitating complaint, which the pair of junior researchers regrettably had to name “intestinal brainitude”: the DSC implants, that is, having successfully built brain tissue in whatever region of the brain they were surgically assigned to, after some months began partially to revert to their duodenal function and were thus beginning to convey excretal slurry through human brains—only the matter was a bit more complicated than this, technically speaking: what really was going on was that the enhanced neuronal and synaptic connections once established began to convey . . . well, this really is difficult: let's just say, “undigested cognition”.

Even worse, the condition once diagnosed seemed utterly irreversible and yielded most unpleasant olfactory effects.

Where matters stand today concerns us all:

Concealing themselves from public view until they've presented their latest research at the World DSC Research Congress, Doctors Rumen and Ventral are rumored to be warning of latent side-effects that can result from otherwise successful DSC implantation.

Equally alarming, Doctors Carne and Depthford of the DSC Clinical Research Institute seem to have been involved in a tragic accident at the bottom of an institute elevator shaft: the investigation into their untimely deaths continues.

—and meanwhile, incredible reports have begun leaking out of nose-twisting odors emanating from the scalps and ears (and, frankly, the nostrils and mouths) of patients thought to have benefitted from successful DSC implants in the fairly recent past: thought to be afflicted are some of the world's leading politicians, journalists, producers, tech executives, publishers, academicians, musicians, actors, directors, sociologists, psychologists, geneticists, biologists, scientists (generally), mathematicians, engineers, historians, economists, philosophers . . .

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