

# Répliquer pour éclaircir une controverse scientifique : quelques enseignements d'une expérience en cours...

04/04/2025, Lyon



Je sers la science et c'est ma joie

I serve Science and it's my joy

[raphael.levy@univ-paris13.fr](mailto:raphael.levy@univ-paris13.fr)

Mastodon: [@raphavisses@mastodon.top](https://masto.host/raphavisses)

Blog: <https://raphazlab.wordpress.com/>

Laboratory for Vascular Translational Science

Pourquoi?

# Pourquoi?

faire de la science, être un.e scientifique

Guérir –  
nouveaux  
traitements

Solution à des  
problèmes  
environnementaux

Curiosité, plaisir de  
la découverte

# Pourquoi?

faire de la science, être un.e scientifique

Guérir –  
nouveaux  
traitements

Solution à des  
problèmes  
environnementaux

Curiosité, plaisir de  
la découverte

Pour avoir un travail, progresser dans une carrière, etc...

# Pourquoi?

faire de la science, être un.e scientifique

Nos motivations sont variées... et nous travaillons dans un environnement organisationnel qui encourage/valorise certains comportements.

# Comment?

faire de la science, être un.e scientifique

Questionnement éthique

Bon pour la science, pour la reproductibilité et le progrès de la connaissance



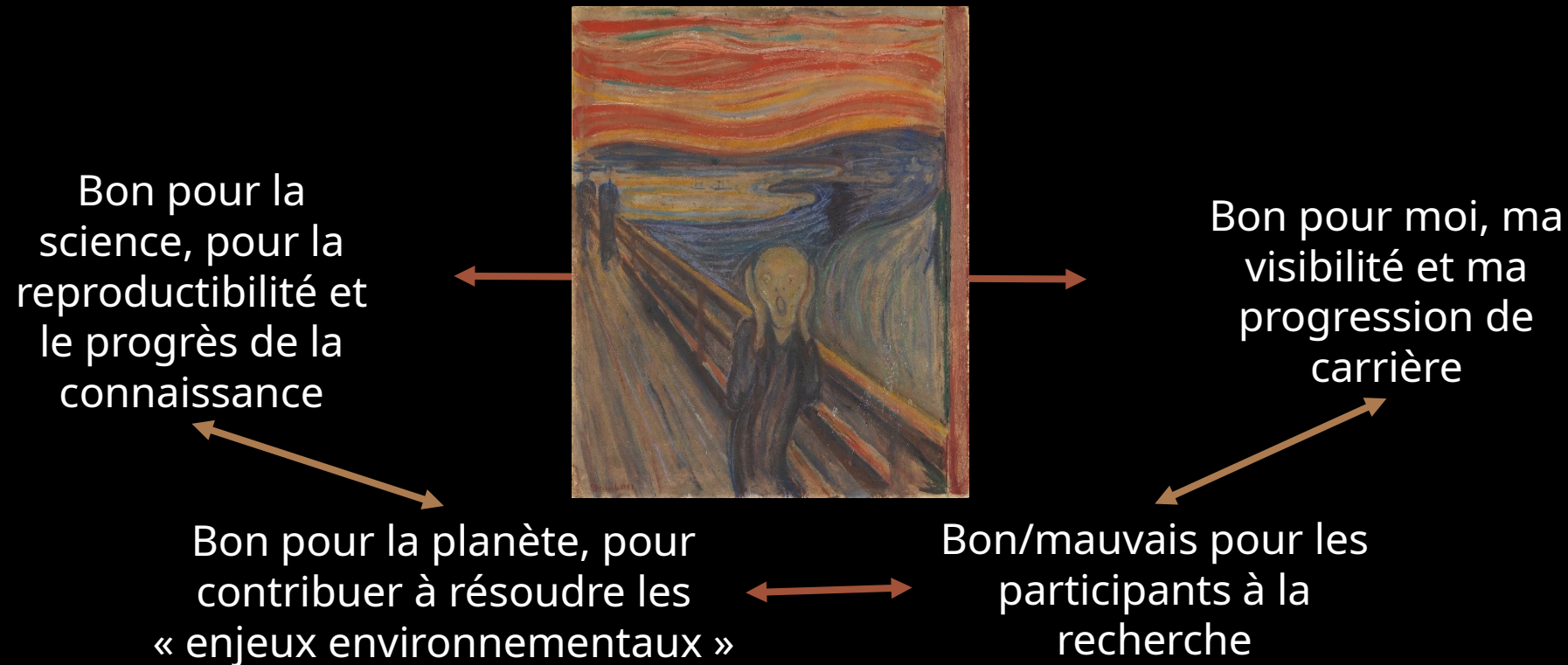
Bon pour moi, ma visibilité et ma progression de carrière

Bon pour la planète, pour contribuer à résoudre les « enjeux environnementaux »

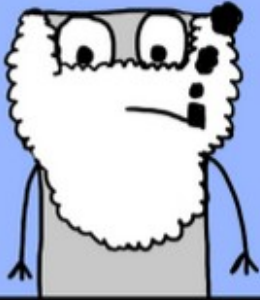
Bon/mauvais pour les participants à la recherche

# Comment?

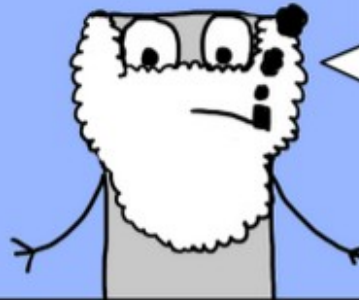
faire de la science, être un.e scientifique



Judging from your poor track of research publications, I seriously doubt that you have what it takes to work in my lab.

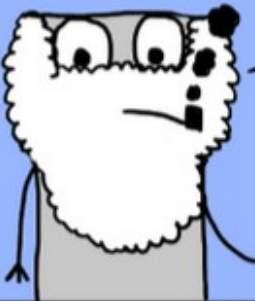


Publications are the currency of research. You either have them or you don't.



And you simply don't.

Consequently, I am afraid that I have to discontinue your role within this group.



I'm sorry, but there is only room for competitive researchers here.

I'm an undergrad. This is my first day.



Excuses will only embarrass you.



©The Upturned Microscope

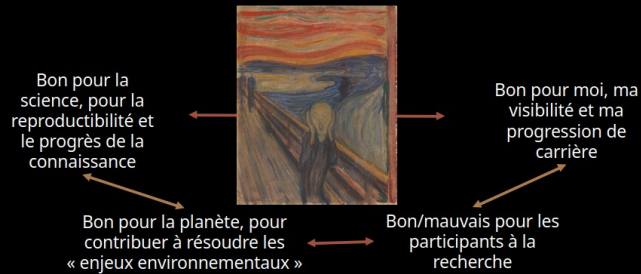
Bon pour moi, ma visibilité et ma progression de carrière

Des articles, si possibles publiés dans des journaux à haut IF, et des contrats

Exagérations, fausses promesses, QRPs, méconduites

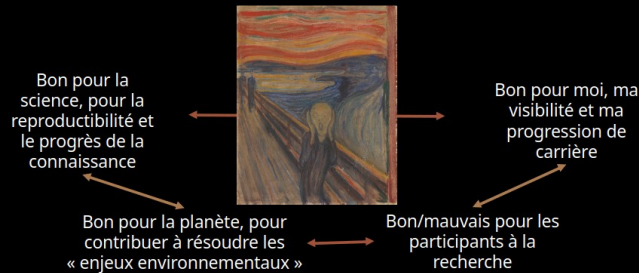


# Quelques commentaires à propos de points abordés hier



- “Causes de la non reproductibilité : experimental design, manque de formation, QRPs”
- “Communication avec le grand public... et si oui comment”
- “Ce qu’il y a dans les registered reports, c’est digne de confiance”
- “industries pharmaceutiques”

# Quelques commentaires à propos de points abordés hier..



- “Causes de la non reproductibilité : experimental design, manque de formation, QRPs”
- “Communication avec le grand public... et si oui comment”
- “Ce qu’il y a dans les registered reports, c’est digne de confiance”
- “industries pharmaceutiques”

Feature » Essay

## How an opioid giant deployed a playbook for moulding doctors' minds

BMJ 2024 ; 385 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.q1208> (Published 10 June 2024)

Cite this as: *BMJ* 2024;385:q1208

Article

Related content

Metrics

Responses

Sergio Sismondo <sup>1 2</sup>, Maud Bernisson <sup>2</sup>

Author affiliations ▼

Correspondence to: S Sismondo [sismondo@queensu.ca](mailto:sismondo@queensu.ca), M Bernisson [maud.bernisson@ru.nl](mailto:maud.bernisson@ru.nl)

... abordés hier, ou non

## Bulle (scientifique)

### Métaphore

- Bulle spéculative
- Bulle d'espoirs, d'investissements \$\$\$
- Fragile, surtout si on la gonfle trop

### À l'intérieur de la bulle

- *Echo chamber* - within the bubble you do not hear (epistemic bubble: no facts) - OR not acknowledge other's opinions (echo chamber: no trust).

*Max Roßman & Cyrus Mody [NanoBubbles Jan 2023]*



Boy Blowing Soap Bubble with Pipe.  
Christian Aigens (1870 - 1940)

# Les bulles scientifiques

Cette métaphore décrit fort bien de nombreux domaines scientifiques :

- Nano, COVID, IA, ...
- IRM pour Parkinson? Des promesses, des centaines d'articles mais pas d'applications cliniques.
- "Reproducibility crisis", "Open science" ?!

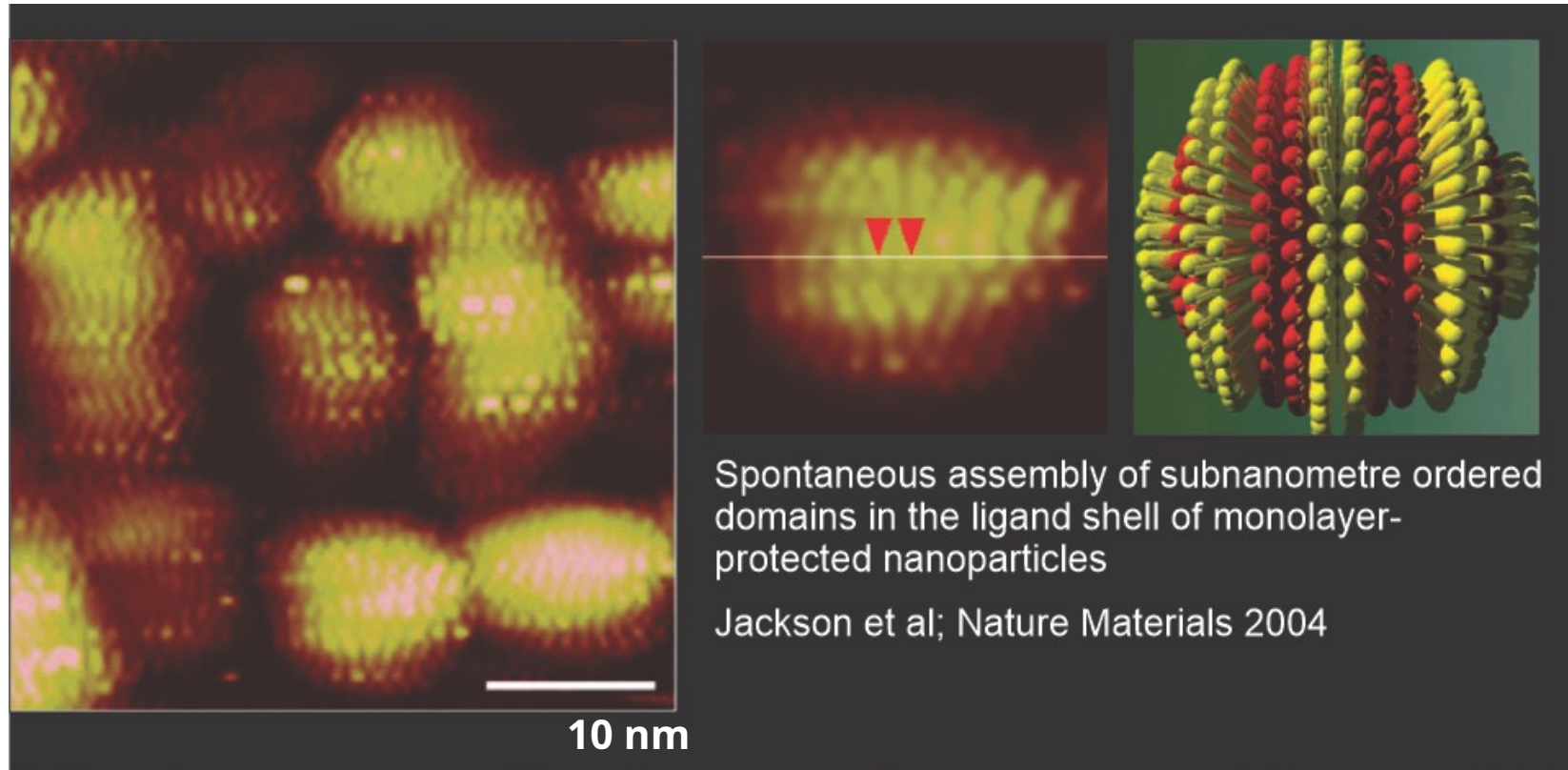
Conséquences?

- Le gâchis de ressources
- L'amplification de recherche non-reproductible
- L'erreur voire la désinformation scientifique
- Risque de perte de confiance dans la science

Auto-  
correction de  
la science

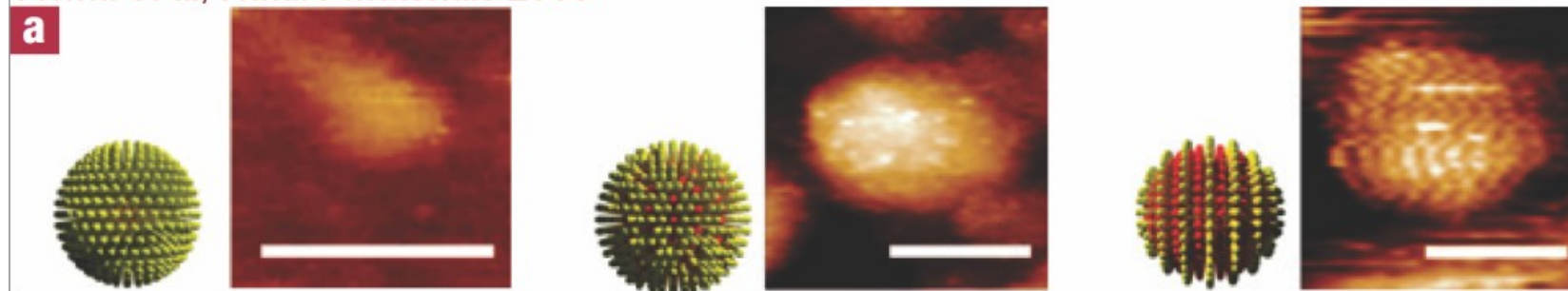
Que se passe-t-il lorsque l'on essaie de  
corriger la science?

# Organised scepticism in practice : what should we do when we identify problems in a scientific article?



Surface-structure-regulated cell-membrane penetration by monolayer-protected nanoparticles

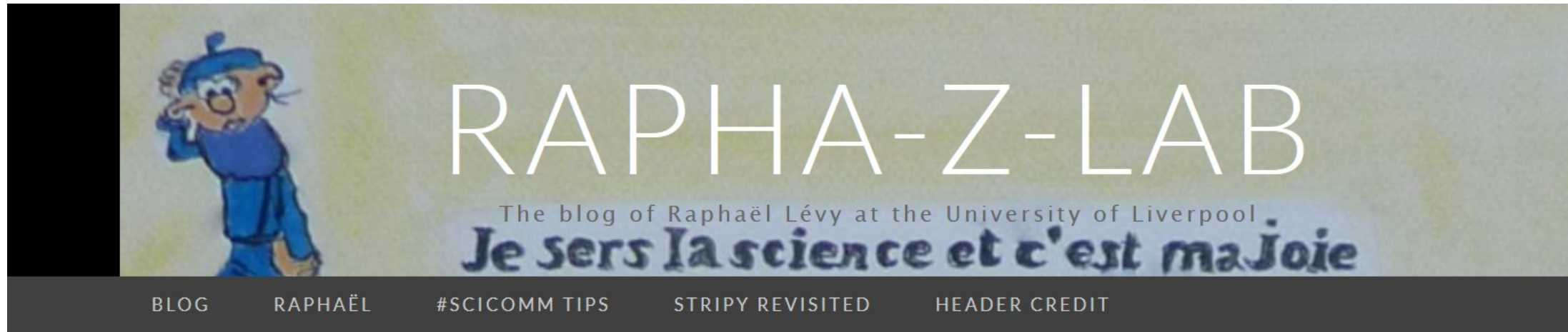
Verma et al; Nature Materials 2008



*Stripy  
Nanoparticles  
Revisited  
Submitted 2009*

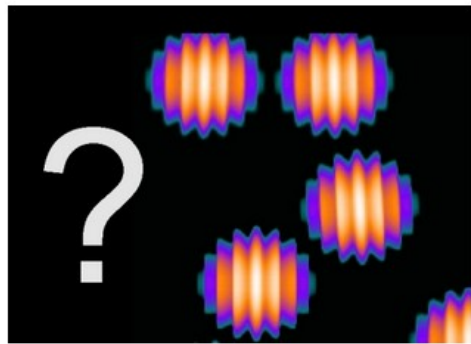
A little later, in  
2008...

The web offers other spaces where organised (?) skepticism can take place



**A blog:**  
A place where one can discuss articles without having to wait for three years for referees' reports and editors' decisions...

## STRIPY NANOPARTICLES REVISITED




Challenging published results is an onerous but necessary task. Today, our article entitled [Stripy Nanoparticles Revisited](#) has been published in *Small*, three years after its initial submission to this journal (3/12/09) and about three and a half years after the first submission (to Nature Materials, 21/07/09).

As its title indicates, the article challenges the evidence for the existence and properties of “stripy” nanoparticles. The stripy nanoparticle hypothesis was first

Search ...

My Tweets

### COMMENTS

 Raphaël Lévy on What Proportion of Scientific...

 Raphaël Lévy on What



« Psychiatrists From Another Dimension (Part 2) Medical Journal Apologizes "For The Distress Caused" By A Paper »

## Postpublication "Cyberbullying" and the Professional Self

By Neuroskeptic | January 27, 2014 4:47 pm



An article in *Science* has been getting a lot of attention this week: **Nano-Imaging Feud Sets Online Sites Sizzling**



The 'stripey nanoparticles' debate, which I covered a few weeks ago, is still going on. In 2004, Francesco Stellacci and his colleagues published a paper

SUBSCRIBE

Sign in | Register

FREE Newsletter e-mail address



AT THE FRONT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

HOME NEWS COMMENT FEAT

Breaking news | Politics and Policy | Re:

HOME NEWS

## Stellacci 'stripy nanoparticle' dispute heats up

23 JANUARY 2014 | BY PAUL JUMP

Analysis critical of professor's discovery claim is published on arXiv



- PRINT
- EMAIL
- SHARE
- COMMENTS (2)
- RATE
- SAVE



ABOUT

CONTRIBUTORS

GET IN TOUCH

8th

## ARE FLAWS IN PEER REVIEW SOMEONE ELSE'S PROBLEM?

By Philip Moriarty On April 8, 2013



ly

AL ARTICLES WEBINARS COMMENT FEATURES PODCASTS PRO

THE NANOPARTICLES LOST THEIR STRIPES?

s lost their stripes?





Home / Search

The PubPeer database contains all articles.

title:reproducibility



advanced search

To leave the first comment on a specific article, paste a unique identifier such as a **DOI**, **PubMed ID**, or **arXiv ID** into the search bar.

## Login to save this search and receive email alerts

Search publications for: **title:reproducibility**

53 results

**4  
months  
ago**

### Reproducibility and long-term stability of Sn doped MnO<sub>2</sub> nanostructures: Practical photocatalytic systems and wastewater treatment applications

S. Panimalar, M. Subash, M. Chandrasekar, R. Uthrakumar, C. Inmozhi, Wedad A. Al-Onazi, Amal M. Al-Mohaimeed, Tse-Wei Chen, J. Kennedy, M. Maaza, K. Kaviyarasu

Chemosphere (2022)

4 comments

**5  
months  
ago**

### Statistical methods for conducting agreement (comparison of clinical tests) and precision (repeatability or reproducibility) studies in optometry and ophthalmology

Colm McAlinden, Jyoti Khadka, Konrad Pesudovs

# Mieux comprendre les barrières à la correction de la science : le projet NanoBubbles



**How, when and why science fails to correct itself?**

<https://nanobubbles.hypotheses.org/>

This presentation is part of the project **NanoBubbles: how, when and why does science fail to correct itself?** that has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme.

Grant agreement number ID: 951393



European Research Council  
Established by the European Commission



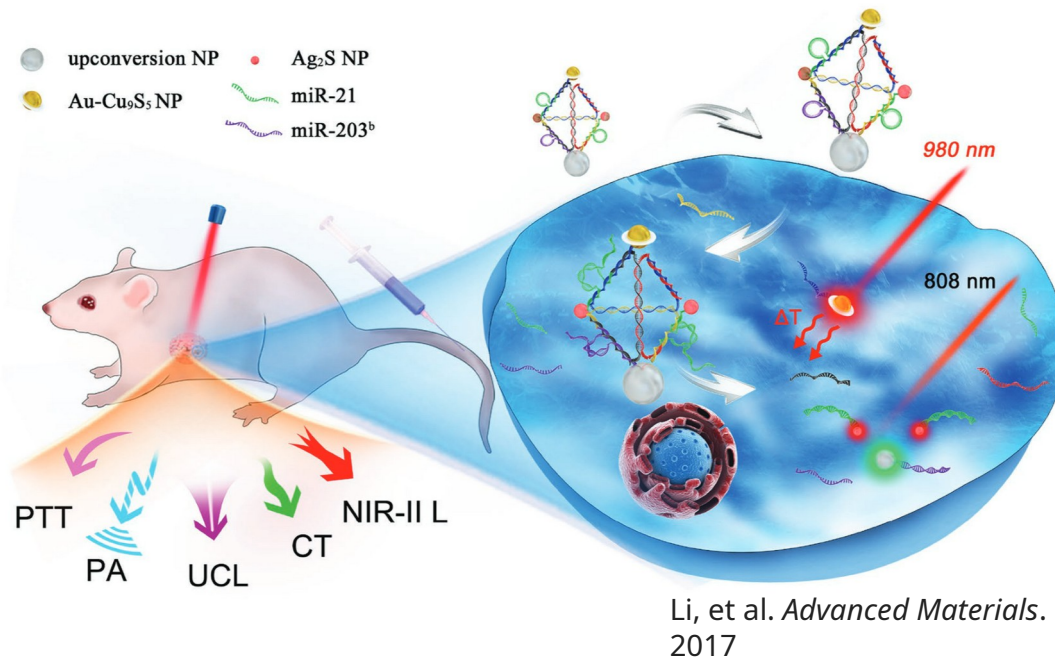
# Le projet de réplication de NanoBubbles

*La « bulle » : l'utilisation de nanosondes  
pour la détection intracellulaire*



Maha Said et Mustafa Gharib  
LVTS, USPN

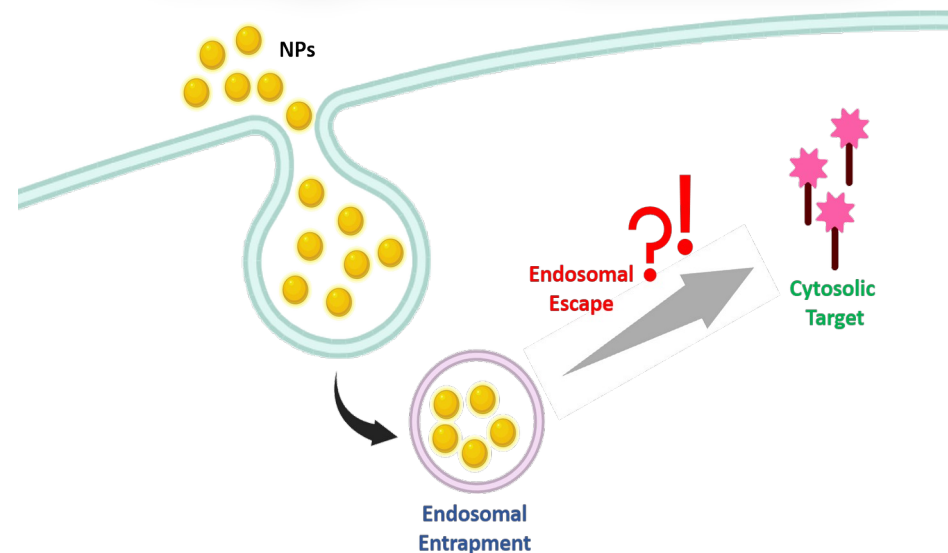
# Les nanoparticules parviennent-elles à s'échapper des endosomes ?



# 1<sup>st</sup> **Replication** Initiative in Nanobiotechnology

## Paradox of endosomal escape of NPs?!

**Thousands** of research articles reporting the use of NPs as probes to **detect cytosolic targets** where what has been known is that the **majority of NPs are entrapped inside endosomes!!**



# Process



★ : Peer-review

**How much of the endocytosed nanoparticles escape the endosome?**

**Does endosomal escape occur in studies reporting cytosolic sensing?**



Inclusion criteria for selected studies:

- 1-Detected by a defined query
- 2-Have average citation per year of 14 or more
- 3-Belong to the 3 most common type of nanoparticles in our corpus.
- 4-Feasibility

Article 1 : 2-8, 8-9 in progress

Article 2 : 2-6, 6 in progress

# Replication #1: pre-registration

Communication

## Carbon-Dot-Based Dual-Emission Nanohybrid Produces a Ratiometric Fluorescent Sensor for In Vivo Imaging of Cellular Copper Ions<sup>†</sup>

Anwei Zhu, Qiang Qu, Xiangling Shao, Biao Kong, Prof. Dr. Yang Tian ✉

First published: 08 March 2012 | <https://doi.org/10.1002/anie.201109089> | Citations: 472



Quelques unes des difficultés :

- Informations manquantes dans l'article original + silence des auteurs
- Planifier l'ensemble du protocole d'expérience et d'analyse
  - ✓ Peut-on synthétiser ces nanosondes?
  - ✓ Détectent-elles les ions cuivres?
  - ✓ Détectent-elles les ions cuivres à l'intérieur des cellules?
  - ✓ ... dans un modèle biologique pertinent

OSF PREPRINTS ▼ Pre-registration ≡

Replication of "Carbon-Dot-Based Dual-Emission Nanohybrid Produces a Ratiometric Fluorescent Sensor for In Vivo Imaging of Cellular Copper Ions"

AUTHORS

Maha Said, Mustafa Gharib, Samia Zrig, and Raphaël Lévy

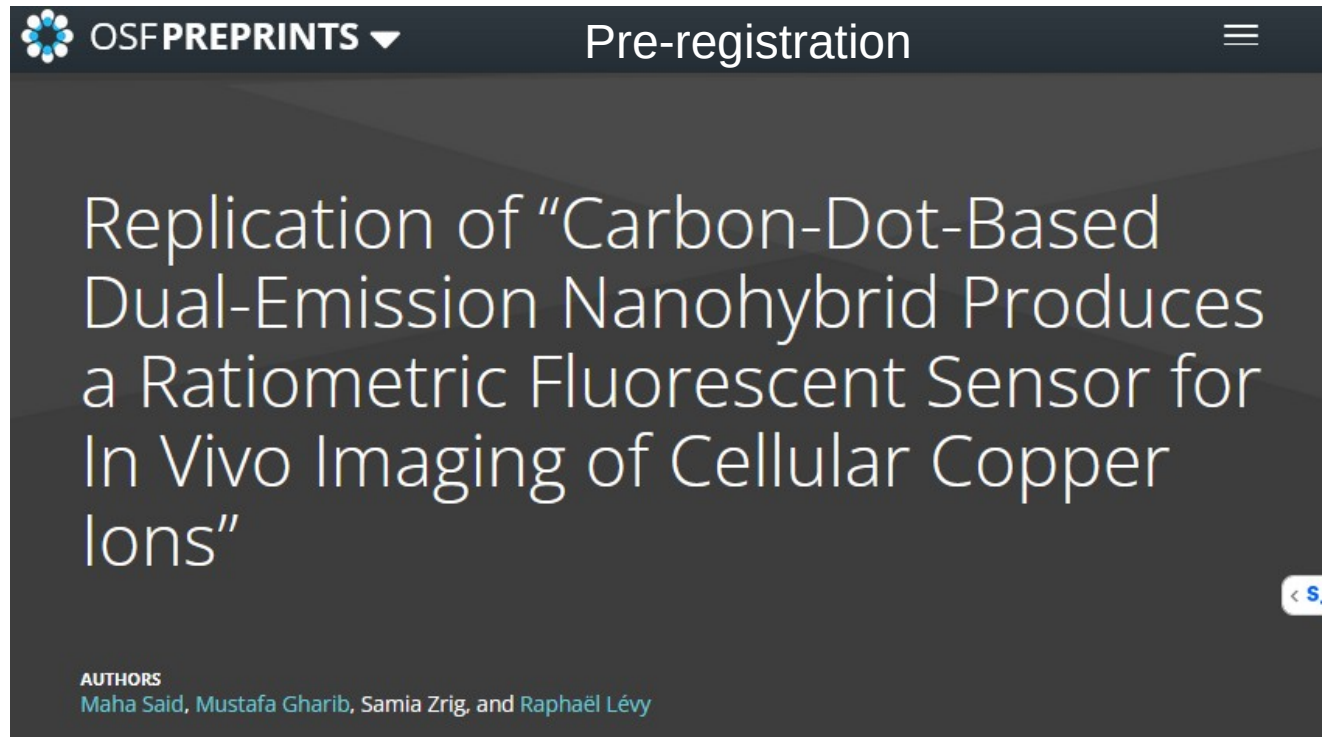
# Replication #1: pre-registration

Communication

## Carbon-Dot-Based Dual-Emission Nanohybrid Produces a Ratiometric Fluorescent Sensor for In Vivo Imaging of Cellular Copper Ions<sup>†</sup>

Anwei Zhu, Qiang Qu, Xiangling Shao, Biao Kong, Prof. Dr. Yang Tian ✉

First published: 08 March 2012 | <https://doi.org/10.1002/anie.201109089> | Citations: 472



OSFPREPRINTS ▾ Pre-registration ☰

# Replication of "Carbon-Dot-Based Dual-Emission Nanohybrid Produces a Ratiometric Fluorescent Sensor for In Vivo Imaging of Cellular Copper Ions"

AUTHORS  
Maha Said, Mustafa Gharib, Samia Zrig, and Raphaël Lévy



Recommendation

Share Post

Printable page

## Replicating, Revising and Reforming: Unpicking the Apparent Nanoparticle Endosomal Escape Paradox

Emily Linnane and Yuki Yamada <sup>ORCID</sup> based on reviews by Cecilia Menard-Moyon and Zeljka Krpetic

A recommendation of:

STAGE 1



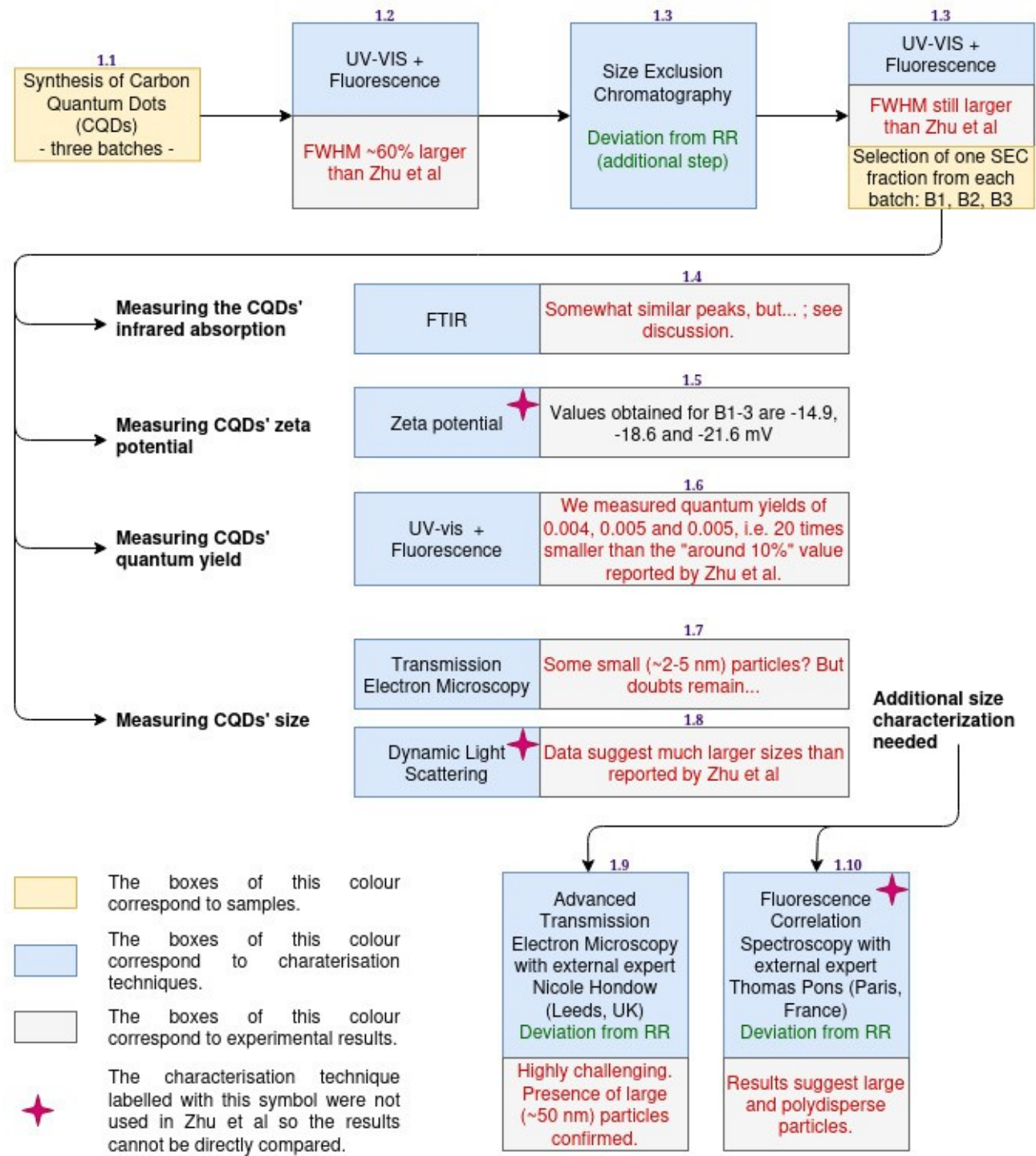
Replication of "Carbon-Dot-Based Dual-Emission Nanohybrid Produces a Ratiometric Fluorescent Sensor for In Vivo Imaging of Cellular Copper Ions"

Maha Said, Mustafa Gharib, Samia Zrig, Raphaël Lévy  
<https://osf.io/kf9qe/>  
version 3

READ REPORT ON SERVER

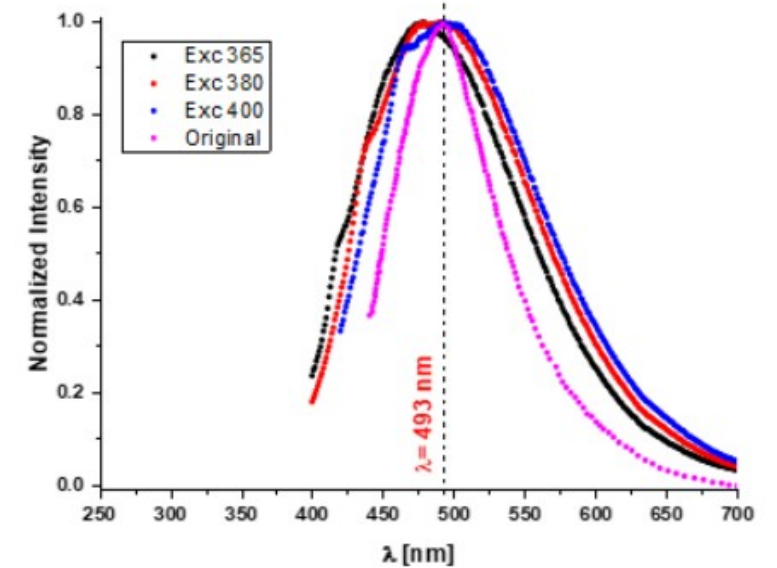


Peut-on synthétiser ces nanosondes?  
 Première étape... les "carbon quantum dots"



# Réplication #1 : résultats

- ✓ Peut-on synthétiser ces nanosondes? ✓
- ✓ Détectent-elles les ions cuivres?
- ✓ Détectent-elles les ions cuivres à l'intérieur des cellules?
- ✓ ... dans un modèle biologique pertinent

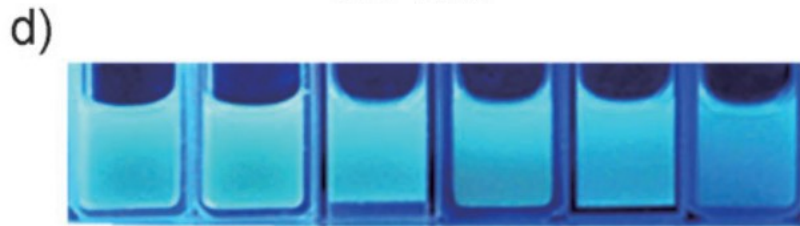
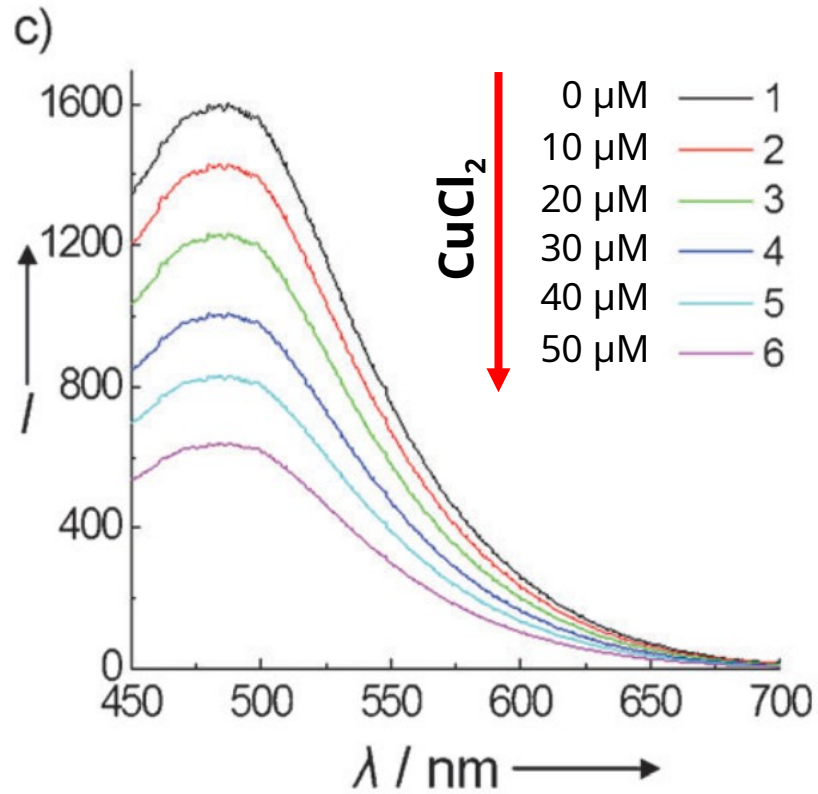


# Réplication #1 : résultats

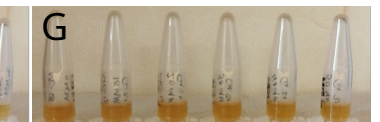
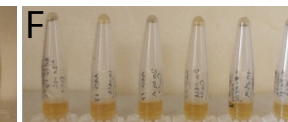
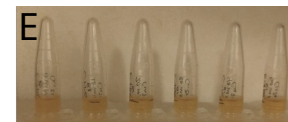
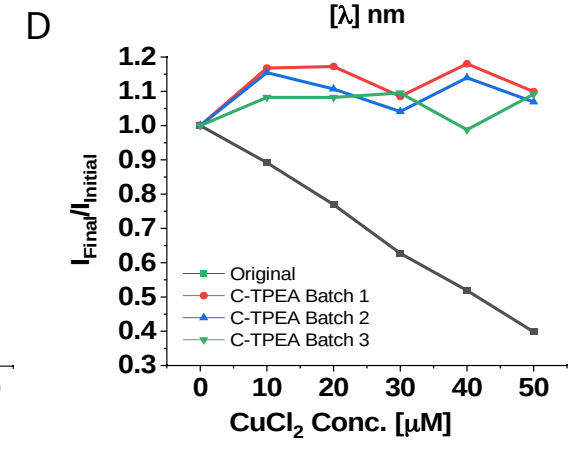
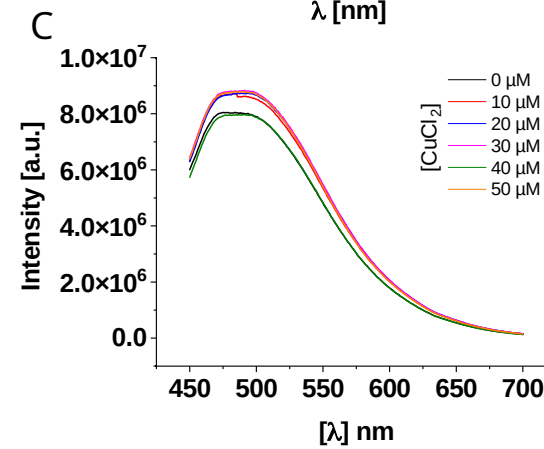
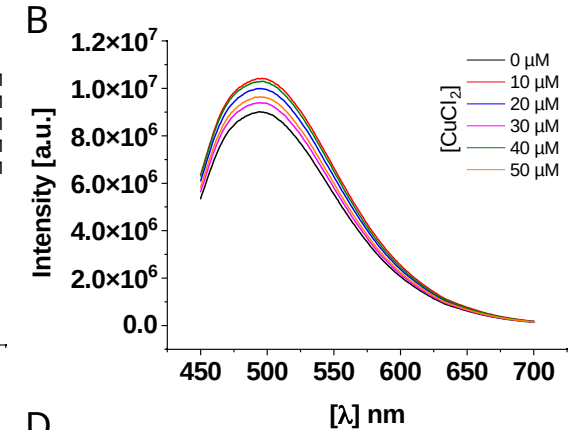
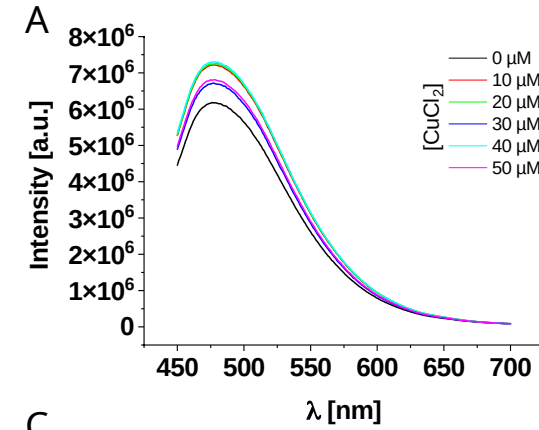
- ✓ Peut-on synthétiser ces nanosondes? ✓
- ✓ Détectent-elles les ions cuivres?
- ✓ Détectent-elles les ions cuivres à l'intérieur des cellules?
- ✓ ... dans un modèle biologique pertinent

# Failure to replicate $\text{Cu}^{2+}$ sensing

CQDs-TPEA



Original



$\text{CuCl}_2$   
[ $\mu\text{M}$ ]

NanoBubbles

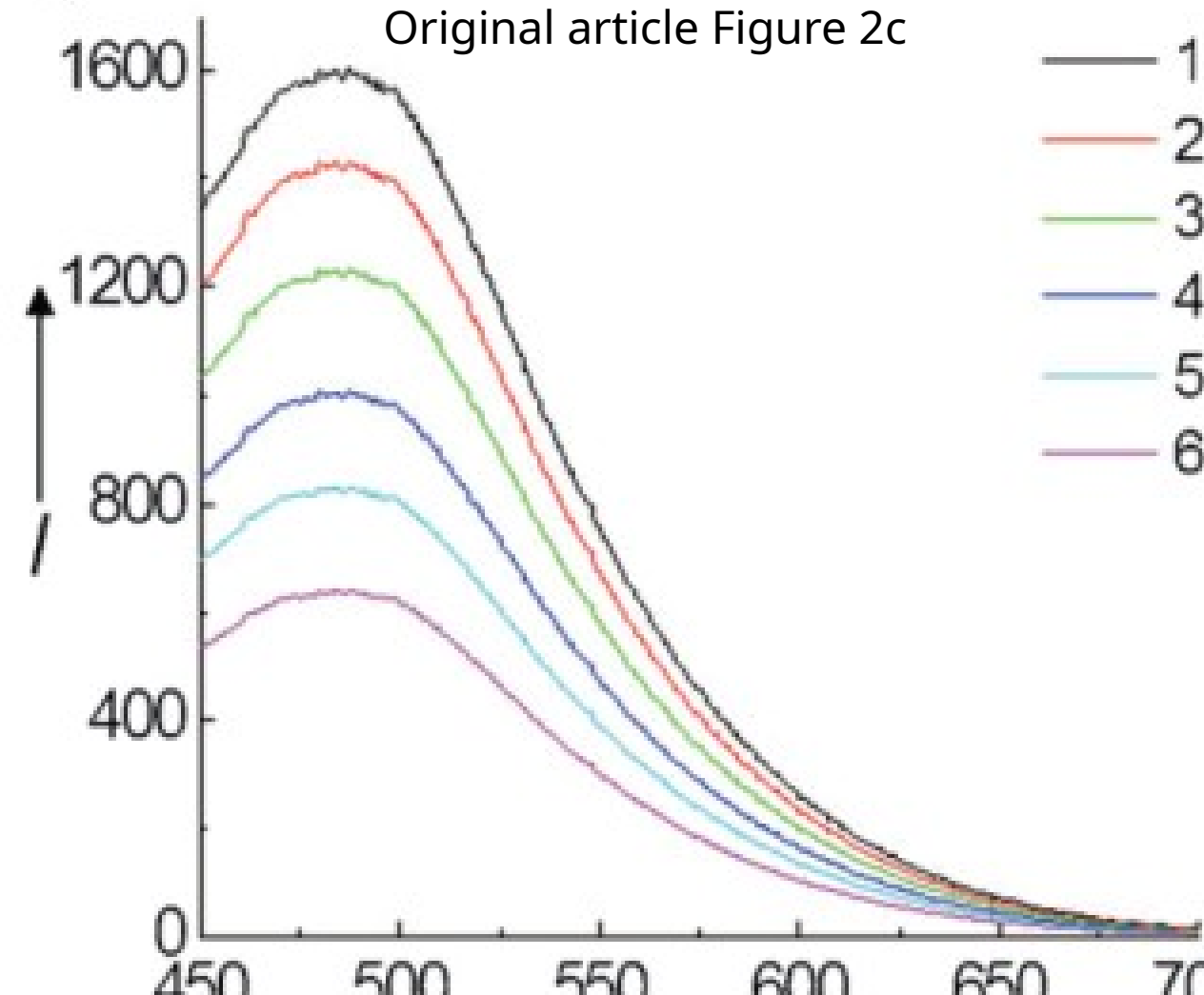
# Réplication #1 : résultats

- ✓ Peut-on synthétiser ces nanosondes? ✓
- ✓ Détectent-elles les ions cuivres? ✗
- ✓ Détectent-elles les ions cuivres à l'intérieur des cellules?
- ✓ ... dans un modèle biologique pertinent

# Réplication #1 : résultats

- ✓ Peut-on synthétiser ces nanosondes? ✓
- ✓ Détectent-elles les ions cuivres? ✗
- ✓ Détectent-elles les ions cuivres à l'intérieur des cellules?
- ✓ ... dans un modèle biologique pertinent

c)



# Réplication #1 : publication (à venir..)

- ✓ Peut-on synthétiser ces nanosondes? ✓
- ✓ Détectent-elles les ions cuivres? ✗
- ✓ Détectent-elles les ions cuivres à l'intérieur des cellules?
- ✓ ... dans un modèle biologique pertinent

Aborted replication of...

+



# Réplication #2

## Nano-Flares: Probes for Transfection and mRNA Detection in Living Cells

Dwight S. Seferos, David A. Giljohann, Haley D. Hill, Andrew E. Prigodich, and Chad A. Mirkin

[View Author Information](#) ▾

✓ **Cite this:** *J. Am. Chem. Soc.* 2007, 129, 50, 15477–15479

Publication Date: November 23, 2007 ▾

<https://doi.org/10.1021/ja0776529>

Copyright © 2007 American Chemical Society

[RIGHTS & PERMISSIONS](#)

Article Views

12747

Altmetric

39

Citations

595

[LEARN ABOUT THESE METRICS](#)

Share Add to Export



 OSF PREPRINTS ▾



Replication of “Nano-Flares: Probes for Transfection and mRNA Detection in Living Cells”

AUTHORS

Raphaël Lévy, Maha Said, and Mustafa Gharib



# Répliquer pour éclaircir une controverse scientifique : quelques enseignements d'une expérience en cours...

04/04/2025, Lyon



[raphael.levy@univ-paris13.fr](mailto:raphael.levy@univ-paris13.fr)

Mastodon: [@raphavisses@mastodon.top](https://masto.host/raphavisses)

Blog: <https://raphazlab.wordpress.com/>

Laboratory for Vascular Translational Science

Je sers la science et c'est ma joie

I serve Science and it's my joy

# IP, Aurasense LCC, Aurasense Therapeutics, Exicure, raising millions of dollars of public and private funds.

Particles for detecting intracellular targets

US20100129808A1  
United States

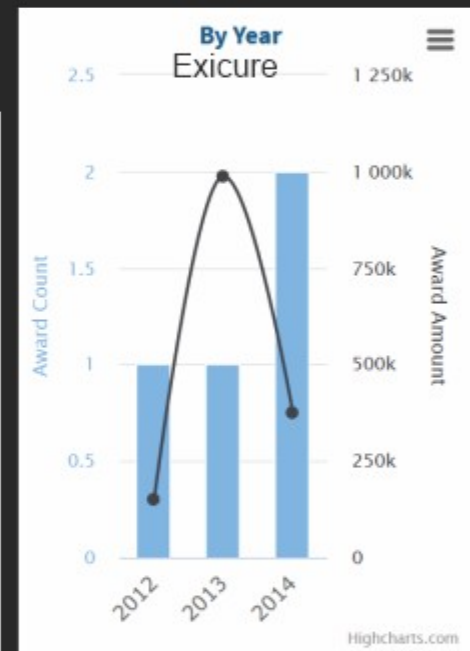
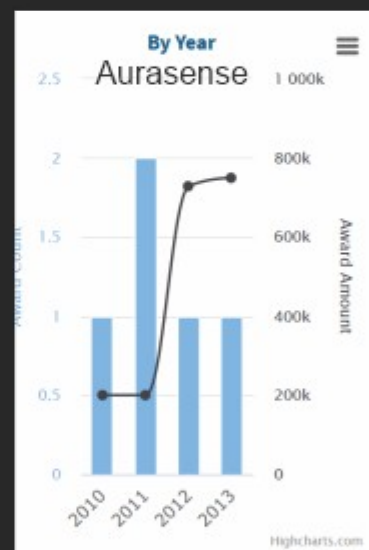
Download PDF Find Prior Art Similar

Inventor: Chad A. Mirkin, Dwight Seferos, David A. Gijjohann  
Current Assignee: Northwestern University

Worldwide applications  
2008 · EP CN AU CA WO KR MX JP US 2013 · US

Application US12/526,560 events ⓘ  
2007-02-09 · Priority to US90064807P  
2008-02-11 · Application filed by Northwestern University

Department of Defense  
Department of Health and Human Services



www.prnewswire.com › news-releases › aurasense-thera...  
[AuraSense Therapeutics Completes \\$13.6 Million Series C ...](#)

17 Jun 2014 - PRNewswire/ - **AuraSense** Therapeutics, a Chicago-based biopharmaceutical company commercializing spherical nucleic acid (SNA™) ...

www.americaninno.com › Chicagoinno  
[AuraSense Raises \\$18 Million Series C - AmericanInno](#)

6 Feb 2015 - Biotech Startup **AuraSense**, Backed by Bill Gates and Google's Eric ... The company has raised more than \$27 million since it launched in 2009 ...

www.fiercebiotech.com › biotech › exicure-bags-cash-a...  
[Exicure raises \\$11.2M in cash as psoriasis, I-O assets near ...](#)

6 Nov 2017 - China's Luye Pharma led the \$11.2 million financing with support from ... That work led to the creation of **AuraSense** Therapeutics, which in ...

www.genengnews.com › ... › Gene Therapy

[Purdue Pharma, Exicure Launch Up-to-\\$790M+ SNA](#)

12 Dec 2016 - Agreement gives Purdue Pharma options to develop **Exicure** AST-005, three additional targets for psoriasis and other ...

Biotech

**Backed by Bill Gates, low-profile Exicure steps into spotlight with a \$42M R&D gamble**

# Prizes. Lots of prizes.



Chinese Government  
2018



## Centenary Prize 2015 Winner

**Professor Chad Mirkin**  
Northwestern University

Awarded for his development of spherical nucleic acids and new nanotechnology-based tools in biomedicine and materials science



## About the Winner












Chad Mirkin is the Director of the International Institute for Nanotechnology and the George B Rathmann Professor of Chemistry, Chemical and Biological Engineering, Biomedical Engineering, Materials Science and Engineering, and Medicine at Northwestern University. He is a chemist and a world-renowned nanoscience expert, who is known for his discovery and development of spherical nucleic acids (SNAs) and SNA-based biodetection and therapeutic



# Multimodal neuro-nanotechnology: Challenging the existing paradigm in glioblastoma therapy



Proceedings of the  
National Academy of Sciences  
of the United States of America

Sergej Kudruk , Connor M. Forsyth , Michelle Z. Dion , Jenny K. Hedlund Orbeck , Jingqin Luo, Robyn S. Klein ,  
Albert H. Kim , Amy B. Heimberger, Chad A. Mirkin  , Alexander H. Stegh , and Natalie Artzi   -7 [Authors Info](#)  
& [Affiliations](#)

Edited by Catherine Murphy, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, IL; received September 20, 2023; accepted December 19, 2023

February 12, 2024 | 121 (8) e2306973121 | <https://doi-org.proxy.insermbiblio.inist.fr/10.1073/pnas.2306973121>

**April 3,  
2024**

I submit a letter to the Editor in Chief of PNAS

**May 3,  
2024**

Raphael, The statements you have been making are factually false and damaging. You will be hearing from my lawyer next week regarding the defamation and the serious legal consequences for it. Sincerely,  
Chad Mirkin

**May 15,  
2024**

Dear Dr. Levy, We represent Chad Mirkin. Attached is our Cease and Desist Demand concerning false statements you recently disseminated disparaging Dr. Mirkin. Your attention to this matter is recommended. Sincerely, Phillip Zisook

**June 17,  
2024**

My letter to the Editor in Chief of PNAS is rejected... "it does not meet PNAS's requirements for Letters to address a difference of scientific opinion"



By Copyright (C) 2002 Kenneth & Gabrielle Adelman, California Coastal Records Project,  
[www.californiacoastline.org](http://www.californiacoastline.org), CC BY-SA 3.0

# Retraction Watch

Tracking retractions as a window into the scientific process



## Exclusive: Kavli prize winner threatens to sue critic for defamation

July 16, 2024

## PNAS corrects article by Kavli prize winner who threatened to sue critic

August 6, 2024

NEWS

## Award-winning chemist threatens to sue critic

BY DALMEET SINGH CHAWLA | 14 AUGUST 2024



Science



< BACK TO IN THE PIPELINE

IN THE PIPELINE | THE SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE

## See You In Court, or in Print?

15 AUG 2024 • 8:50 AM ET • BY [DEREK LOWE](#) • 2 MIN READ • [COMMENTS](#)