

July 4, 2014

**Statement by the President of MBSJ Regarding Response to STAP Cell Research Papers
(Third Statement)**

On July 2, RIKEN, the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research (Japan), announced that two papers published in *Nature* regarding STAP cells had been retracted. The Molecular Biology Society of Japan applauds this retraction as a step in the right direction even though it took roughly half a year from our first call for RIKEN's appropriate response to these papers and for their early retraction, the Society's position from the very start.

Questions regarding the many irregularities in these papers have not been given appropriate analysis, and likewise, many members of the scientific community, including members of our Society, have expressed their doubts regarding participation by the papers' authors in experiments to reproduce their results. Such a failure of the institution concerned to conduct an appropriate response to the irregularities greatly damages the integrity of science and should also be gravely regarded for the influence it could have on the development of the next generation of researchers. At the same time, this is also a betrayal of the people of Japan, who indirectly support research in the life sciences through their taxes.

Concern with the irregularities in that research has risen beyond the scientific community; it has drawn the attention of the broader population, a result of inappropriately holding a press conference when the papers were first released and inviting excessive attention in the media. This can be considered an influence of the commercialization and industrialization of research in the life sciences. We scientists must respond to changes in the environment in which science is conducted by striving to foster an even stronger sense of ethics, and we strongly hope that RIKEN, which encompasses so many outstanding scientists, will show itself ready to serve as a model for such efforts.

So that the current situation may be resolved as quickly as possible, I would again like to express my hopes as the President of the Molecular Biology Society of Japan that RIKEN take the following steps:

- That RIKEN seek to clarify the research irregularities that led to *Nature*'s retraction of the papers.
- That experiments seeking to reproduce the STAP cell research be frozen until such clarification is achieved.

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