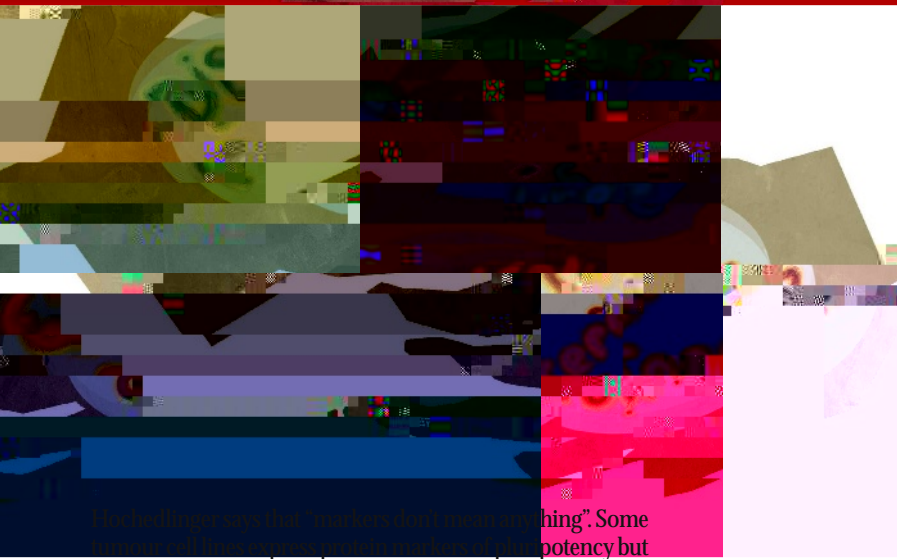


Excited by their potential for biomedical research and therapy and lured by the ease with which they can be created, many researchers are looking into induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells. Created from adult cells by a simple genetic trick, iPS cells seem to have regained an embryonic 'stemness' that might allow them to become any type of cell in the body. The concept is so appealing that some scientists and policy-makers even argue that related approaches such as therapeutic cloning and embryonic stem-cell research, which require the destruction of embryos, should be halted. But for biologists, iPS cells still present a black box. As resources pour in and patients' expectations





Thomson says that "markers don't mean anything". Some human cell lines express proteins markers of pluripotency but don't make anything other than tumour cells, for example.

And reports of the iPS cells' properties have been conflicting. Thomson, for instance, found that iPS cells not only expressed similar genes to em.117 131.43brt2-5.6m107.811 k(a)8.496.6(BT-w9.3 f8 0 ,1(a)828.4(n)3.4(.526(a) 11227. t)-s)