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To whom it may concern,

In steadfast support of the Black voices calling for equality, our lab is discussing what we can do as scientists to create actionable change against racism and injustice in our past, present and future. Our inspiration comes from the case of Henrietta Lacks, a Black woman whose cells (HeLa) have become invaluable to biomedical research and were instrumental in the development of the polio vaccine. These cells were obtained unethically and without the knowledge of Henrietta or her family. While scientists continue to use HeLa cells to study biological phenomena that can later be monetized through the creation of therapeutics, her family does not receive compensation from the use of her cells.

Henrietta's story is, unfortunately, not an isolated incident. Historically, minority communities have been exploited for scientific advancement such as the heatstroke experiments of Thomas Hamilton, the development of modern-day gynecology by James Marion Sims, the Crownsville State Hospital, and the United States Public Health Service Tuskegee Syphilis Study and Inoculation Sexually Transmitted Diseases Studies. **These appropriations of the minority body underscore the racism that pervades American institutions.**

To account for the scientific and medical profit obtained through experiments performed using HeLa cells, our lab has pledged to make donations to the Henrietta Lacks Foundation for all HeLa cell lines we created in the past and those that we create in the future. We encourage other labs to do the same. The Henrietta Lacks Foundation (<http://henrietalacksfoundation.org/>) provides financial assistance to individuals and families who were involved in historic research without their knowledge, consent, or benefit. This includes the cases of Henrietta Lacks and HeLa cells, the Tuskegee Syphilis Studies, The Human Radiation Experiments, among others. We arrived at this decision after hours of conversations, including with several members of the Lacks family. While some voices in our community are calling for an end to the use of HeLa cells altogether, we were moved by the pride that many Lacks family members have in HeLa cells, and their hope that they will continue to be used for positive advances in research. This is one small step towards justice we can take as scientists.

Sincerely,



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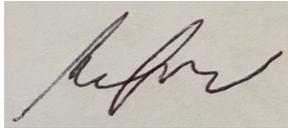
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