

# Genetic secrets of human egg discovered

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U.S. scientists say they have identified the genes that are unique to the human egg.

The Michigan State University researchers say the human egg's ability to transform into a new life, or into new cells that may someday save lives, is well documented. The mystery has been in the mechanics -- how a single cell can transform so nimbly.

Now the researchers say the new identification opens the way to understanding the genes' functions, which may lead to solving problems from infertility to degenerative diseases.

Jose Cibelli, MSU professor of physiology and animal science, said: "There are thousands of genes that are redundant. We found about one in 1,000 genes that are unique to the eggs -- and some of them, they don't have a known function yet. Now we can clone these genes and put them into cells and see if they may have a role in the creation of stem cells -- without fertilization or destruction of human embryos."

The study is detailed in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

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