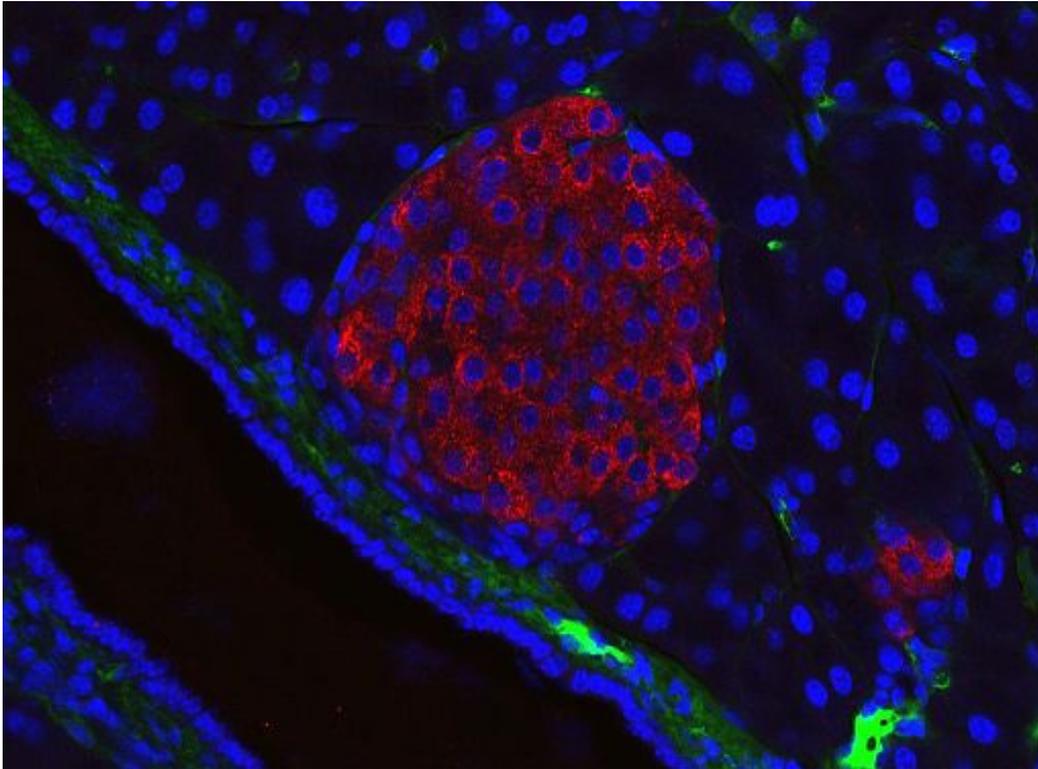


Will You One Day Be Able to Grow New Beta Cells?

Insulin Nation

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Researchers at the Diabetes Research Institute announce animal trial results that suggest cells outside of the pancreas can produce insulin.



Until recently, beta cell replacement therapy has been hampered by a shortage of raw material, as growing the cells in a lab has been time-consuming and expensive. While scientists are now finding [better ways](#) to grow the cells in the lab, they are also trying to see if they can grow beta cells within the body..

According to a [press release](#), researchers from the Diabetes Research Institute believe that stem cells produced in an area that connects the liver and pancreas to the intestines might be enlisted to make new beta cells in people with Type 1 diabetes. DRI researchers plan to study the stem cells in this network, called the biliary tree, to see if they can be used to restore insulin production.

Stem cells are produced in utero, but remain in the body after a person has been born. Biliary tree stem cells, called pancreatic precursors, have the potential to regenerate and grow into new, mature cells. Researchers have observed these cells being converted for insulin production in some shellfish and fish with an organ that combines the function of the liver and the pancreas.

The researchers now wonder if stem cells in the biliary tree can do the same in humans. Already, they've established that human biliary tree cells implanted into animals produced insulin and improved blood sugar levels. They want to study this process further, and eventually conduct human trials – although no timeline was given for

this in the press release.

These findings, along with recent news that a researcher has mastered a way to [grow](#) functional beta cells in 40 days, provide further evidence that beta cell therapy is transitioning from a theoretical therapy to a practical one.

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