



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Junying Yu, Leading Stem Cell Researcher,
Joins Cellular Dynamics International**

MADISON, Wis., July 22, 2009 – [Cellular Dynamics International](#) (CDI) announced today the appointment of [Junying Yu](#), Ph.D., as senior research fellow. Her significant body of published research has shown her to be one of the leading stem cell researchers in the world. Dr. Yu's scientific leadership will help to accelerate the company's efforts toward harnessing the power of induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells to reproducibly differentiate into essential cell types for drug discovery and development and eventually therapeutic use.

The appointment reflects the rapid progress CDI is making in developing commercially available terminal cells (e.g. heart, blood, neural cells, etc.) derived from iPS cells for drug development. This progress has been highlighted by the recent announcements of two strategic technology in-license arrangements with [Mount Sinai School of Medicine](#) and [Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis](#) and the company's recent announcement of the [generation of iPS cells from normal human blood](#).

"Dr. Yu strengthens CDI's scientific team and our ability to exploit our growing patent portfolio," said Chris Kendrick-Parker, CDI's Chief Commercial Officer. "Junying is one of the top stem cell researchers in the world, and with her on our team we feel confident that we will be able to provide additional, much needed stem cell research tools and therapies to the preclinical, and eventually clinical, market faster."

Robert Palay, chairman and chief executive officer of CDI, added, "We are very pleased that, of the many offers Dr. Yu has entertained, she has chosen CDI to further her research and career. Her personal goals align with the company's goals in being the leader in iPS cell technology, industrializing the process to create the quantity of cells required for use as tools and therapeutics and accelerating the process of bringing personalized medicine to realization."

Dr. Yu said, "I'm excited to join the team of scientists at CDI working towards personalized therapeutics. *In vitro* drug testing can be severely limited by the lack of physiologically relevant models arising from non-human animal models or models that do not appropriately reflect the target population. iPS cell technology overcomes these obstacles and offers the promise of generating differentiated cell types from virtually any genetic background."

Yu Leads iPS Cell Breakthroughs, Twice

Yu's addition to CDI comes on the heels of her recent *Science* [article](#), published online March 26, 2009, of her breakthrough research on vector-free iPS cells. Yu describes a methodology whereby iPS cells were created from human skin cells without the integration of foreign DNA into the genome. This non-integrating methodology, which CDI has dubbed iPS 2.0™, alleviates safety concerns over the use of iPS cells in therapeutic settings and removes the barrier of taking the technology into a clinical setting. (See illustration, [iPS 2.0: A Step Closer to Personalized Medicine](#).)

Yu published her initial groundbreaking iPS cell research in *Science* in [November 2007](#). That research proved that ordinary skin cells could be reprogrammed to a stem cell state through the insertion of four genes. iPS cells are similar to human embryonic stem (hES) cells in their proliferative and developmental potential, but they avoid the controversial and ethical concerns surrounding hES cells. Considered a significant scientific breakthrough, iPS cells additionally enable the creation of stem cells from *any* individual. However in the original method, because the inserted genes are not an innate part of the cell's DNA and are integrated directly into the genome via a viral vector, concerns have arisen over the potential risks associated with the insertion of foreign DNA into the cell's genome. For example, insertion mutations could affect the biology of the cell or potentially lead to tumorigenesis.

Dr. Yu, who comes to CDI from an associate scientist position in stem cell-pioneer Dr. James Thomson's lab at the University of Wisconsin, was lead author on both iPS breakthrough papers. The research for these iPS papers was performed in the laboratory of Dr. Thomson, who was the first to successfully establish human embryonic stem cell lines in [1998](#).

"It has been an absolute privilege to work with Junying for the past six years at UW, and I am excited to continue the relationship," said Dr. Thomson, CDI's Chief Scientific Officer. "Junying could have gone anywhere, but she chose CDI, an endorsement of which I am proud. I have always been optimistic in CDI's success, however now I have great confidence. If Junying takes on a project, it succeeds."

About Cellular Dynamics International, Inc.

Cellular Dynamics International, Inc. (CDI) is a leading developer of next-generation stem cell technologies for drug development and personalized medicine applications. CDI harnesses the power of pluripotent stem cells and their ability to differentiate into any cell type for world-class drug development tools. In addition, it is the leader in iPS technology, the production of pluripotent stem cell lines from adult tissue. CDI was founded in 2004 by [Dr. James Thomson](#), a pioneer in human embryonic stem cell research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Tactics II Ventures, a Wisconsin-based venture capital fund. CDI's facilities are located in Madison, Wisconsin. See www.cellulardynamics.com.

Editor's Note: Photo of Junying Yu and bio available upon request or at <http://www.cellulardynamics.com/news/medialib/>

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