

Henrietta's immortal cells

[Science](#), [Biology](#)



Henrietta's Immortal Cells If medical researchers were to list the top 5 important events in biology in the last 100 years, He-La cells would feature in the list. Lying on the bed of Johns Hopkins hospital in the year 1950, there was no way Henrietta Lacks, who was diagnosed with a unique form of cervical cancer, could have known, that her tumorous cells would become immortal research tools. Dr. George Gey harvested some of Henrietta's cervical cells for research purposes. His assistant successfully cultured them and to their amazement the cells divided manifold in just a short span of time. Sadly, this same rate of cell proliferation killed Henrietta but the cells have lived on to become support pillars of biological researches. " He-La are the first immortal human cell lineage" (Howard W Jones, Victor A. McKusick; Obstetrics and gynecology, pg-945-949). Dr. Gey distributed the cells worldwide to researchers, to help in research endeavors, because " He-La cells could be grown by anyone capable of trypsinizing cells" (Fredrick Bang, History of tissue culture), they divided rapidly, synthesized normal proteins, mimicked normal cell signaling, gene regulation and could be infected, and thus they became potential tools for study. He-La cells helped to develop Salk's vaccine and the cells have also been used for gene mapping, Aids and Cancer studies, gene cloning, immunological studies. Author Rebecca Skloot " More than 60, 000 published science articles have mentioned He-La cell research and the number just keeps on increasing" (Rebecca Skloot, The Immortal life of Henreitta Lacks.)

REFERENCES

" History of tissue culture at Johns Hopkins", Fredrick Bang, Bulletin of Medical history (1999)

“ The life, death, and Life after Death of Henrietta Lacks”, Smith, Van,
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