

<b>Fiscal Year:</b>	FY 2016	<b>Task Last Updated:</b>	FY 02/20/2016
<b>PI Name:</b>	Hammer, Bruce Ph.D.		
<b>Project Title:</b>	Study of Mammalian Pluripotent Stem Cells in Microgravity		
<b>Division Name:</b>	Space Biology		
<b>Program/Discipline:</b>			
<b>Program/Discipline--Element/Subdiscipline:</b>			
<b>Joint Agency Name:</b>	<b>TechPort:</b>	No	
<b>Human Research Program Elements:</b>	None		
<b>Human Research Program Risks:</b>	None		
<b>Space Biology Element:</b>	(1) Cell & Molecular Biology		
<b>Space Biology Cross-Element Discipline:</b>	(1) Developmental Biology		
<b>Space Biology Special Category:</b>	(1) Cell Culture		
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<b>Zip Code:</b>	55455-3007	<b>Congressional District:</b>	5
<b>Comments:</b>			
<b>Project Type:</b>	Flight	<b>Solicitation / Funding Source:</b>	2014 Space Biology Flight NNH14ZTT001N
<b>Start Date:</b>	11/01/2014	<b>End Date:</b>	10/31/2016
<b>No. of Post Docs:</b>	0	<b>No. of PhD Degrees:</b>	0
<b>No. of PhD Candidates:</b>	0	<b>No. of Master' Degrees:</b>	0
<b>No. of Master's Candidates:</b>	0	<b>No. of Bachelor's Degrees:</b>	0
<b>No. of Bachelor's Candidates:</b>	0	<b>Monitoring Center:</b>	NASA ARC
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<b>Flight Program:</b>	ISS		
<b>Flight Assignment:</b>			
<b>Key Personnel Changes/Previous PI:</b>			
<b>COI Name (Institution):</b>	Dutton, James Ph.D. ( University of Minnesota ) Kidder, Louis Ph.D. ( University of Minnesota )		
<b>Grant/Contract No.:</b>	NNX15AB38G		
<b>Performance Goal No.:</b>			
<b>Performance Goal Text:</b>	We propose to investigate the effect of gravity on fundamental properties of mammalian stem cells during differentiation of 3-D cultures of induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells. Experiments aboard the ISS (International Space Station), STS, and ground-based simulations have demonstrated that microgravity influences gene expression, cell proliferation, and differentiation in stem cells. However, the mechanism behind these observations is not clearly understood. In this study we will investigate how exposure to microgravity fundamentally alters the regulation of Oct4, a transcription factor necessary to maintain pluripotency, and how these changes can affect the timing, progression, and outcomes of cell differentiation. Our laboratory has created an Oct4:CreER mTmG transgenic mouse that, for the first time, allows lineage tracing of Oct4 expression in stem cells and their progeny. We will use iPS cells derived from this model to determine the influence of microgravity on the loss of pluripotency and differentiation.		

<b>Task Description:</b>	During the Flight Definition Phase we will use magnetic levitation, a unique ground-based simulation of orbital free fall, to optimize execution of the Spaceflight Experiment Phase. This approach will maximize the success of space-based studies. We propose to investigate the effect of gravity on the timing and spatial arrangement of the loss of Oct4 expression in differentiating iPS cell aggregates. We will also examine the effect of gravity on gene expression in cohorts of Oct4 expressing and non-expressing cells during differentiation by comparing the results of ground-based experiments to those conducted on orbit. Finally, we will explore mechanisms behind the effect of microgravity on both Oct4 gene regulation and control of downstream gene expression by Oct4. This work will determine the effect of spaceflight on changes in Oct4 gene expression during differentiation of pluripotent stem cells and the consequences of these changes on differentiation outcomes. This will increase our understanding of fundamental stem cell behavior in microgravity.
<b>Rationale for HRP Directed Research:</b>	
<b>Research Impact/Earth Benefits:</b>	Gravity likely influences organismal development but little is currently understood about its specific influence on stem cell differentiation. We propose to utilize a novel system to investigate how microgravity fundamentally changes the timing and spatial arrangement of the loss of Oct4 gene expression during the differentiation of stem cells. We expect this to have consequences on differentiation outcomes. Our results from this study will ultimately have a direct impact on improving the translation of human stem cell based treatments. Cell manufacturing in microgravity may speed-up the rate of iPSC (induced Pluripotency Stem Cell) differentiation, thereby reducing the time and cost to obtain a therapeutic dose of cells. If this can be done on-orbit and replicated on Earth with magnetic levitation, this will have significant commercialization possibilities.
<b>Task Progress:</b>	Due to a delay in funding of the project we have postponed the full start of work. During this time we have completed the Flight Definition Plan. This was presented to NASA Headquarters and NASA Ames in June 2015. The plan was approved and we are on hold until funding of the project commences. Due to the translational nature of our proposed work and in an effort to acquire more ISS resources (including crew time), we submitted an ISSNL Co-sponsorship Request Document between NASA and CASIS (Center for the Advancement of Science in Space) in August 2015 and are awaiting the outcome of the application.
<b>Bibliography Type:</b>	Description: (Last Updated: )