

Before It Was a Cure, It Was a Waste of Money: 'Traces Thursday' Series Presents Case Studies in Scientific Patience

New weekly Substack series explores the long arc of medical breakthroughs, why it takes so long to cure diseases, and why basic science funding can't wait.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, August 27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Stand Up for Science published the [first of a twelve-part series on its Science Fight Club](#) Substack, kicking off "Traces Thursday."

The weekly series is written by Dr. Jeremy Berg, former director of the National Institute of General Medical Sciences at NIH and former Editor-in-Chief of Science magazine, now a member of the Board of Advisors with Stand Up for Science. The series explores the stories of how some of the most impactful and breakthrough drugs and treatments were developed.

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Dr. Jeremy Berg, author of Traces Thursday series

Each week, Berg dives into a historical example that illustrates why the development of these therapeutics take so long, including the scientific, regulatory, and cultural challenges that slow down the process.

“In considering how to support highly impactful research, it is often instructive to trace back the circuitous paths that led to breakthroughs. These often involve bringing together different discoveries and then bumpy roads to full implementation. Anyone who is interested in learning

about scientific progress, from policy makers to the public, can benefit from these succinct histories,” said author Jeremy Berg.

The inaugural post is an examination of oncogenes, a century-long science story: the cancer-



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causing mechanism was first observed in a chicken in 1910. The specific case study involves Ras, the first human oncogene that was discovered in the 1980s, which didn't lead to a trial-proven cancer drug until 2023. Just yesterday, the FDA approved the [first Ras inhibitor drug](#) for the treatment of pancreatic cancer.

The series helps underscore the case for sustained basic research investments in science, particularly biomedical research, as a worthwhile pursuit. The landmark therapies presented in the series all depended on long-term research funding for their development.

Subsequent posts will be published on the [Science Fight Club Substack](#) each Thursday for the next 11 weeks.

Berg is available for comment.

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Stand Up for Science is a grassroots, Washington, D.C. based, non-profit organization mobilizing the fight for science and democracy. Stand Up for Science was formed in February 2025 in response to actions affecting federal science agencies and funding of the American scientific ecosystem. On March 7th, Stand Up For Science mobilized over 50,000 people at 170+ events across the world on its first National Day of Action. Federal scientists across multiple agencies (NIH, EPA, NASA, FEMA) have chosen Stand Up for Science as the platform to publish their open letters of concern. Stand Up For Science is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization [EIN: 33-4154429] and donations are not tax-deductible.

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