# Quality, not Quantity: Richard Harris and the Reproducibility Crisis

By Devin Brown

Science is at a standstill due to low reproducibility rates in biomedicine studies. A massive 52% of scientists polled view this as a crisis. Richard Harris, award-winning NPR science correspondent, spoke October 19th at the Spurlock Museum on such obstacles to scientific research.

Harris spoke in support of his new book *Rigor Mortis*. He alleges that biomedicine research is slowing down due to research issues. This consists of erroneous research designs, bias in experiments, and the decline of NIH funding.

Compared with NIH funding in 2009 through 2010, funding has decreased by 20%.

Harris attests to a few solutions to the crisis. Along with "easing the financial crunch", he sees better training, research transparency, and validating ingredients as the solution.

Harris cites contaminated ingredients such as HeLa cells as a large issue. These common ingredients invalidate an experiment.

The largest change needed is "good science, not volume" according to Harris; he believes that fewer, yet more thorough studies should be published.

He sees this as correlating with a passion for science. He says that one's love for work, not money, should be an incentive.

Audience members asked how to combat the general public's distrust of science when, according to Harris' figures, only 48.7% of studies analyzed were valid in their findings. Harris' explanation was people "bringing their own beliefs into science," rather than analyzing the facts at face value.

Harris' outlook on the future of science is optimistic. "Science is self correcting. Eventually, all these problems get sorted out," he said.

*To learn more about Richard Harris and his work, please visit http://www.npr.org/people/2100631/richard-harris.*