

NEWS OF THE WEEK

GENETICS:

Erasing MicroRNAs Reveals Their Powerful Punch

Jennifer Couzin

For more than 2 decades, biologists have illuminated the roles of genes by deleting them in mice and studying these "knockout" animals, which lack the proteins encoded by the targeted genes. Now, scientists say they're beginning to uncover an entirely new layer of gene regulation by using the same strategy to erase portions of genes that make snippets of RNA. Just as knockouts of traditional protein-coding genes yielded a treasure trove of knowledge about how different genes govern health and disease, this next generation of knockouts could fill in the gaps that remain.

<http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/short/316/5824/530>