### TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2004

### Drug arouses UNC studies State commission

### **BY ELIZABETH BLACK**

Until recently, two options have been available for male contraception - condoms and vasectomies.

But new research stemming from UNC laboratories has discovered that a natural protein produces an immune reaction in the male reproductive system that, when made into an immunization, could work as a nonhormonal male contraceptive. The shot would allow men to

regain fertility after stopping treat-

rely on taking pills daily, wearing condoms, or getting a vasectomy — which usually proves irreversible.

We've been interested in immuno-contraception for many years," said Michael O'Rand, a profes-sor in the Department of Cell and Developmental Biology who led the project. "Since it works in monkeys, there should be no theoretical rea-son why it shouldn't work in men."

The experiment immunized male macacas monkeys with a form of eppin, a protein produced in the ment, and would not force them to testis and epididymis. Monkeys that

### developed an immune response to the protein were not able to fertilize a female egg.

The protein causes the body's defense mechanism to disable the sperm. This occurs because the protein never enters the bloodstream, so when it is injected for the first time, the immune system does not recognize it and produces antibodies to fight it.

Stan Beyler, director of embryology and andrology laboratories, said this idea has been around for a while.

"The concept is not something brand new," he said. "It's just find-ing the right molecule. This could be the one." Finding a way to help provide

male contraception, Beyler said, also might help identify people with infertility disorders. Sally Perreault, director of the

reproductive toxicology division at the Environmental Protection Agency, said there have not been many reliable methods of birth

control for men other than barrier methods such as condoms. "I think this would serve a great

ed, allowing men to take responsibility and give couples more choice," Perreault said. If the method is proven safe, effective and reversible, scientists

could invent a safe male contraceptive.

However, the treatment will not be placed on the market anytime soon. "This is a long process," she said. "Clinical trials could take several years." eyler said that it is difficult to predict when the treatment will

be placed on the market, and that much depends on funding. "It needs to be recognized as something that is important and needs a substantial amount of funding and support," he said. "These are areas that we need to continue

to strive to fund and research."

Contact the University Editor

# to revamp voting

CHARLOTTE - A state study commission will convene as early as this week to decide how to overhaul North Carolina's voting machines including the one that lost about
4,500 votes in Carteret County.

Other problems included an Election Day miscount in Mecklenburg County and the delayed discovery of 13,200 ballots in Gaston County.

Despite all 100 counties' reporting unofficial results in North Carolina's Nov 2 election, the outcome of two statewide races won't be known for days.

Protests and requests for recounts have been filed by candidates for agriculture commissioner and state superintendent, forcing election workers to again labor over the more than 3 million ballots cast. They have until Wednesday to finish.

As recounts and protests go on, the quest to restore voter confiat udesk@unc.edu. | dence is taking center stage.

Federal auditing officials will meet today to review a request from six congressional Democrats, including U.S. Rep. Mel Watt of Charlotte, for an investigation of voting problems in North Carolina and other states.

"The objective ultimately is to get to a system where people vote and feel that their vote is being counted," Watt said.

National experts call Carteret County's lost votes one of the worst election flubs this year. There, out-dated software lost 4,500 ballots, which could induce a statewide revote for agriculture commissioner.

Carteret County officials had been assured the machine would take 10,000 ballots, but the software had not been updated. When the machine hit its limit, the screen said "voter log full," said UniLect president Jack Gerbel, whose California company made the machine.



## Judicial system faces scrutiny

### BY MARK PUENTE STAFF WRITER

Legal observers probably would say justice was served after three men received a death sentence and three life sentences for murder and rape in North Carolina.

But lawyers said it represents a serious problem when the three men spend a combined 48 years behind bars — and are later released after courts determine that the evidence used to prosecute them was flawed.

"I am certain that there are many more innocent people behind bars," said Roy Trest, an attorney in Brunswick County. Alan Gell, Darryl Hunt and

Sylvester Smith are three of a growing number of inmates who were wrongly convicted in North Carolina — and freed when new evidence

surfaced years after their trials: Gell was freed from death row in February after 10 years and given a new trial when a judge ruled that prosecutors withheld key evidence during his 1995 trial in the murder of Allen Ray Jenkins. The prosecutors have since been reprimanded.

"The legal system never changes overnight. It is a problem for the entire system. But we're seeing the beginnings of change."

### RICH ROSEN. UNC LAW PROFESSOR

a life sentence for a crime he always denied committing. In December 2003, Willard Brown confessed to the 1984 rape and murder of Deborah Sykes after DNA testing linked him to the crime.

■ Smith was freed Nov. 5 after 20 Hunt served about 18 years of years, when the two children who

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accused him of raping them recant-ed their testimony and implicated a family member. Smith received three life sentences based primarily on the testimony of a 4-year-old

girl and her 6-year-old cousin. Rich Rosen, professor of law at UNC, said officials are aware that people are incarcerated based on identifications.

"That is the single greatest factor-to wrongful prosecutions," he said. "The DNA cases have convinced us. ... We want to lessen the number of times in the future."

On the national level, there have been 117 people exonerated from death row since 1973 because DNA testing showed them to be innocent, according to the Death Penalty Information Center in

Washington, D.C. But the process is slow, and attor-neys are inundated with letters from inmates proclaiming innocence.

"The legal system never changes overnight," Rosen said. "It is a problem for the entire system. But we're seeing the beginnings of change."

Wrongful convictions also are being blamed on lawyers who lack training in capital punishment

"One of the biggest problems is poor lawyering," said Richard Dieter, executive director of the DPIC. "That results in things not

being caught." N.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverly Lake formed the N.C. Actual Innocence Commission in February 2003 to recommend solutions to the problems.

The group comprises legislators, judges, prosecutors, police officers and law professors who review how innocent people are convicted and

how to free them when it happens. "We have looked at pretrial iden-tification procedures," said Rosen, a member of the commission. "We have made recommendations to a

number of police departments." As of Monday, there were 36,292 inmates behind bars and 183 on death row in the state, according to the N.C. Department of Correction

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doms, sperimicide, or dispinagim, must be used for the first week on the new open. MPCOMACTION FOR THE PATTERN See Patient Package Insert. ADVERSE REACTOMS: The most common adverse events reported by 9 to 22% of women using ORTIO EVRA<sup>®</sup> in circular targets (= 3.330, were the following, in order of decremang) incidence, treast symptoms, headache, application sile reaction, nausee, upper respiratory intection, menstural carrups, and abdominiar plan. The most frequent adverse events leading to discontinuation in 1 to 2.4% of women using ORTIO EVRA<sup>®</sup> the trains include the following: names and/or womeling, application site readion, breast symptoms, headache, and emotional liabity.

Telectori, areas symptoms, headacite, and emotion analyze. Listed below are adverse events that have been associated with the use of combin hormonal contraceptives. These are also likely to apply to combination transfermal horn contraceptives such as ORTHO EVRA®.

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There is evidence of an association between the following conditions and the use of combina-tion hormonic contraceptives 1. Neverthere thermotopics 2. Refrait thromotopics The following adverse reactions have been reported in users of combination hormonic con-traceptives and are believed to be drug-related 1. Naussa 2. Volmithg 3. Gardwinet 1. Market and the state of the state 10. Melasma which may persist 11. Bread Changes Indentity, entrained 9. Benar-tons (such as abdominal camps and bloating) 4. Steakthrough bleading 5. Spotting 5. Change in markutal Mark A. Amenoma 8. Strappen immediately and the strappenet, scorebon 10. Melasma which may persist 11. Bread Changes Indentity, entrained 9. Benar-10. Melasma which may persist 11. Bread Changes Indentity, entrained 1. Journal 17. Rest (allergin 18. Mental depression 18. Reduced to lerance to cathophyratise 20. Vagnian candidias 21. Change in corneal curviture (steppening) 22. Indentity of contract lenses 1. Melastica et al. Mental depression 18. Reduced to lerance to cathophyratise 5. Marketh e 6. Revocances 7. Dizzine 8. A. Hantalian 9. Joen 14. Mohills Heis syndrome 5. Marketh e 6. Revocances 7. Dizzine 8. A. Hantalian 9. Joen 14. Mohills Heis syndrom 13. Impaired real nucleon 16. Henryfic ureme 19. Anne 18. Changes in libblo 19. Collis 20. Budd-Chans 19. Mohills 10. Mohills 14. Provinsiti 15. Impaired real nucleon 16. Henryfic ureme 19. Anne 18. Changes in libblo 19. Collis 20. Budd-Chans 19. Mohille 10. Mohills 14. Provinsiti 21. Broazed real nucleon 16. Henryfic ureme 19. Mohills 14. Provinsiti 21. Impaired real nucleon 16. Henryfic ureme 19. Anne 18. Changes in libblo 19. Collis 20. Budd-Chans 10. Counce 19. Serious 11. Beck 10. Provinsiti 21. Broazed real nucleon 16. Henryfic ureme 19. Anne 18. Changes in libblo 19. Collis 20. Budd-Chans 10. Counce 19. Serious 11. Beck 10. Henryfic and the syndrome 2. Langes 10. Henryfic

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A number of innocent people get convicted, Rosen said. But there is no way to determine how many people actually are innocent with out scientific proof.

Attorneys also are concerned about prosecutors relying on children to testify in many capital cases.

Edwin Colfax, executive director of the Center on Wrongful Convictions at the Northwestern University School of Law, said the legal system needs revamping when it comes to interrogating children.

"Child witnesses are problemat-ic. There are major problems with them being manipulated."

In the Smith case, the girls' grandmother, who is now deceased, was covering up for her grandson and coaxed the girls into implicating Smith.

"The main villain is no longer here to be prosecuted," said Trest, Smith's attorney. "Any time you rely on children's testimony, everyone should look at it with a critical eye."

Trest said the jurors who convicted Smith were convinced by the girls' testimony.

There is such an emotional reaction when sex crimes and kids are involved." he said.

The system doesn't work perfectly. But there is a quest to seek the truth."

> Contact the State & National Editor at stntdesk@unc.edu.