Molecular 'barcode' helps decide which sperm will reach an egg

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A protein called CatSper1 may act as a molecular 'barcode' that helps determine which sperm cells will make it to an egg and which are eliminated along the way.

The findings, and the new imaging platform created by the team, may enable scientists to learn more about the steps in the fertilization process and what happens afterwards, such as when the egg implants into the mother's uterus.

"Our study opens up new horizons to visualize and analyze molecular events in single sperm cells during fertilization and the earliest stages of pregnancy," Chung concludes. "This and further studies could ultimately provide new insights to aid the development of novel infertility treatments."

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