



Dear JCC Community,

The New Year is off to a flying start at JCC as you will see from our Departmental updates below. Research outputs from all departments are excellent, research grant success is being achieved and the calibre of our One-Health research is being recognised internationally by publications in top quartile (A+) journals, the large numbers of top 2% scientists among us and various other accolades. Congratulations, are in order especially for Prof. Huang Yu, who has been elected as a Fellow of the British Pharmacological Society (BPS) in 2023 in recognition of his research and contributions in pharmacological science.

Hot on the heels of his keynote presentation at the Global Consultation on African Swine Fever (ASF) Control summit in Rome, a joint initiative of the FAO and World Organisation for Animal Health, the Director of City University's Centre for [Applied One Health Research and Policy Advice](#), Prof. Dirk Pfeiffer (PH Department) featured prominently in local and international media, addressing the complex issues faced by the pork industry dealing with ASF.

I am excited about what 2024 has in store for the JCC. It will see us collaborate on the internal-fit out of the Jockey Club One-Health Tower, our new home, and moving into it, in two phases, in Q4 2024 and Q1 2025. This year also marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of City University's status as a University (previously it was a polytechnic), and the finale of this event, in 2025 will be an international One-Health Summit, hosted in the new One Health Tower in collaboration with [Times Higher Education](#).

Best Wishes.



Jockey Club College of Veterinary  
Medicine and Life Sciences

香港城市大學  
City University of Hong Kong  
in collaboration with Cornell University



**Prof. Vanessa BARRS**  
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Adjunct Professor  
Department of Population Medicine and  
Diagnostic Sciences  
Cornell College of Veterinary Medicine  
**Cornell University**

# News From JCC and Our Departments

## Neuroscience

**Research** (included new awards, new publications, new **successful** external grants, etc.)

### Neuron

**Genome-wide study reveals novel roles for formin-2 in axon regeneration as a microtubule dynamics regulator and therapeutic target for nerve repair**

#### Authors

Ngan Pan Bennett Au, Tan Wu, Xinyu Chen, ..., Giovanni Coppola, Xin Wang, Chi Him Eddie Ma

- Prof Eddie Ma published a paper in *Neuron* which has been selected as a Featured Article. Prof. Ma's research group reveals that ionizing radiation induces intrinsic growth of injured neurons and Fmn2 downregulation. Fmn2 deletion enhances microtubule dynamics, axon regeneration, and function recovery. Using gene signature of Fmn2 deletion identifies FDA-approved metaxalone recapitulating growth-promoting effects of Fmn2 deletion for peripheral nerve injury. [Link to the article](#)
- Nature Reviews Neuroscience highlights their recent paper in *Neuron* as a short news story. [Link to the article](#)

### Staff

Professor Zhitao Hu recently joined the Department of Neuroscience as Associate Professor.

Professor Hu received his BSc and PhD from Huazhong University of Science and Technology. He was previously an Associate Professor at Queensland Brain Institute, University of Queensland.

**WELCOME**  
Professor Hu

Professor Hu's research focuses on the molecular and cellular mechanisms of synaptic transmission, with the long-term goal being to understand how synaptic transmission and synaptic plasticity are regulated by the synaptic release machinery, and how synaptic dysfunction leads to neurological disorders such as autism and epilepsy.

## Biomedical Sciences

**Research** (included new awards, new publications, new **successful** external grants, etc.)

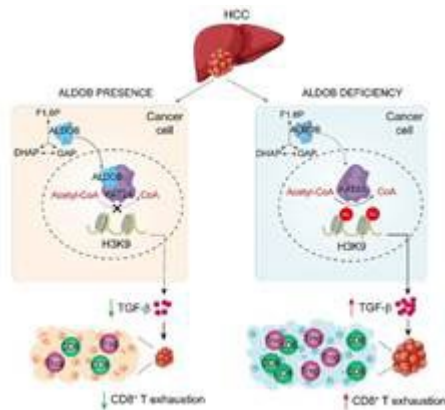
- Congratulation to **Prof Katie Chan** who has recently been awarded a new external grant of Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) from Innovation and Technology Commission, which the project will commence from 1 January 2024.





- **Prof HUANG Yu** has been elected as a Fellow of the British Pharmacological Society (BPS) in 2023 in recognition of his research and contribution in pharmacological science. The BPS announced new Fellows and Honorary Fellows on 28 November 2023. The Society has elected 29 Fellows and awarded 9 Honorary Fellowships by stating *“Our Fellows and Honorary Fellows play an incredibly important role in the Society. Through their work, they further all disciplines of pharmacology in the discovery, development and use of medicines. And through their leadership, and contribution to Society life, they inspire and support members at earlier stages of their career or study.”*

- Seven BMS faculty members (**Prof. CHENG Shuk Han, Prof. HUANG Yu, Prof. LAO Xiangqian, Prof. LO P. C. Gigi, Prof. YANG Mengsu (Michael), Prof. YAO Xi, Prof. YIN Huiyong**) have recently been recognized by Stanford University as part of the world's top 2% most-cited scientists 2023. This prestigious commendation highlights their significant contributions to biomedical research and their impact on advancing scientific knowledge. Congratulations for their remarkable accomplishments and their global recognition. Their work serves as an inspiration to researchers and reinforces the institution's pursuit of scientific excellence.



- **Prof. Huiyong YIN's team** has recently published a paper entitled *“ALDOB/KAT2A Interactions Epigenetically Modulating TGF- $\beta$  Expression and T Cell Functions in Hepatocellular Carcinogenesis”* in **Hepatology**, an A+ journal. These findings unveil a novel mechanism by which a metabolic enzyme in tumour cells epigenetically modulates TGF- $\beta$  signalling, enabling cancer cells to evade immune surveillance and influence the response to immunotherapy.

## Event

- BMS Retreat 2024 took place at Disneyland Hotel on 9 January 2024, our faculty members, colleagues from Technical Office and General Office participated. This retreat provided a rejuvenating and enjoyable day for our BMS staff, offering them a break from the daily routine and providing opportunity for colleagues to connect outside workplace. It features team-building discussion and sharing, which aims to strengthen relationships among colleagues, promote a positive work environment, and recharge our colleagues, enhancing collaboration and productivity in the workplace.



# Veterinary Clinical Sciences

**Research** (included new awards, new publications, new **successful** external grants, etc.)

- Choi, Y.R.; Iturriaga, M.P.; Nekouei, O.; Tu, T.; Van Brussel, K.; **Barrs, V.R.**; **Beatty, J.A.** Domestic Cat Hepadnavirus and Pathogenic Retroviruses; A Sero-Molecular Survey of Cats in Santiago, Chile. *Viruses* **2024**, *16*, 46. <https://doi.org/10.3390/v16010046>
- **Beatty, J.A.**; Tu, T.; Pesavento, P.A.; Cavasin, J.P.; Chen, M.-C.; Lidbury, J.A.; Steiner, J.M.; **Barrs, V.R.**; Cullen, J.M. Domestic Cat Hepadnavirus and Lymphoma. *Viruses* **2023**, *15*, 2294. <https://doi.org/10.3390/v15122294> (Commentary)

**Service**

- **Professor Kate Flay** presented as an invited speaker at the International Symposium on Animal and Public Health, organised by Nanjing Agricultural University on the 15th – 17th December. She spoke about Advancing Ruminant Health and Welfare.



## Upcoming Events (VCS & CAHW)

### CityU JCC Research Seminar cum CityU CAHW Animal Health & Welfare Seminar

CityU JCC Research Seminar cum CAHW Animal Health & Welfare Seminar

**Dermatological problems of brachycephalic dogs and how to address them**


Brachycephalic dogs are still very popular, especially because of their "babyface" appearance and personality. Owners are often unaware of the serious health conditions brachycephaly brings along and how this affects the welfare of their beloved ones. These dogs do not only suffer from brachycephalic obstructive airway syndrome, but also spinal, dental, gastrointestinal, ophthalmological, cardiovascular and dermatological disorders.

In this webinar we will focus on dermatological diseases associated with brachycephaly since many of these diseases occur on a daily basis but are often underrated. Genetic, parasitic, and autoimmune diseases, immune deficiencies, vasculitis, allergies, secondary infectious, claw and anal sac diseases, skin folding, alopecia, pruritus and otitis externa/media have all been reflected as problems in brachycephalic dog breeds. These skin conditions can become chronic and difficult to treat, leading to pruritus and pain, affecting the normal behaviour of these dogs and their quality of life.

The knowledge and understanding of these diseases will not only help with treatment considerations, but also client education and are an important step forward in animal welfare and how breed standards for those dogs should be revised.


**February 21, 2024 (Wed) 1-2pm HKT Online**

Scan for free registration:



Enquiry: [centrehaw@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:centrehaw@cityu.edu.hk)

**Speaker:** **Prof. Stefan Hobi**  
Clinical Associate Professor, Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences  
HK registered & European recognized Specialist in Dermatology



### CityU CAHW Animal Health & Welfare Seminar

CityU Centre for Animal Health and Welfare  
Animal Health & Welfare Seminar

**TRUST, HELP, FRIENDSHIP, AND COOPERATION: POSITIVES OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM**

Throughout history, humans have witnessed numerous conflicts that have led to aggressive interventions, such as war, often resulting in the collapse of societies. Fortunately, evolution has equipped us with skills for conflict resolution, alliance formation, and, believe it or not, hyper-cooperation to build or maintain societies. Only recently have we begun seeking parallels in non-human societies to investigate the evolutionary trajectory of such positive skills. Keeping evolution as the backdrop, Dr. Debottam Bhattacharjee will talk about human-animal trust building, and helping, friendships, and cooperation in animal societies, all based on empirical evidence.

**Speaker**



**DR. DEBOTTAM BHATTACHARJEE**  
Postdoctoral Researcher, Department of Infectious Diseases and Public Health, City University of Hong Kong

**Date and Time**  
**MARCH 14, 2024 (THU) 4-5PM HKT ONLINE**

**Free Registration**



Enquiry: [centrehaw@cityu.edu.hk](mailto:centrehaw@cityu.edu.hk)



Dermatological problems of brachycephalic dogs and how to address them by Prof. Stefan Hobi  
February 21, 2024 (Wed), 1-2pm Online  
([More information](#))

Trust, help, friendship, and cooperation: positives of the animal kingdom by Dr. Debottam Bhattacharjee  
March 14, 2024 (Thu), 4-5pm Online  
([More information](#))

## Infectious Diseases and Public Health

**Research** (included new awards, new publications, new **successful** external grants, etc.)

- **Prof. Alan McElligott** attended an online seminar on 20 Dec 2023 Prof. Alistair Lawrence, University of Edinburgh. Title: The relevance of positive animal welfare and creating good lives for animals. Recording: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xX-4u\\_xoQw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0xX-4u_xoQw)
- Guo, Z., He, Z., Lyu, L., Mao, A., Huang, E., **Liu, K.\*** (2024). Automatic detection of feral pigeons in urban environment using deep learning. *Animals*, 14 (1):159.
- Wang, X., Chen, B., Yang, R., **Liu, K.**, Cao, M. \*, Cuan, K. \* (2024). A non-contact and fast estimating method for respiration rate of cows using machine vision. *Agriculture*, 14(1): 40.
- On December 17th, **Dr. Danhe Yang** was invited to participate in the "Tourism Multi-Species Ethnography" Youth Academic Workshop at the South China University of Technology in Guangzhou. As the main guest speaker, she engaged in discussions regarding how multi-species ethnography contributes to the comprehension, interpretation, and conceptualization of the harmonious coexistence between humans and animals in the realm of tourism.  
In her presentation, approached from an anthropological perspective, Dr.Yang analyzed the conservation and eco-tourism development of the Yunnan snub-nosed monkey. She emphasized that, within the contemporary discourse, the Yunnan snub-nosed monkey within the local cultural landscape is a dynamic entity molded by both internal and external forces stemming from field experiences and the monkey group itself. This dynamic process is intricately woven into various temporal and spatial environments.
- **George HODGSON**, PhD research student under the supervision of **Prof. McELLIGOTT (PH)** and **Prof. FLAY (VCS)**, attended The Association for the Study of Animal Behaviour Winter 2023 Meeting: Animal Cognition: Pure to Applied, in Edinburgh, United Kingdom.
- **Liu T (PH PhD student), Yu J (PH PhD student), Gao Y (PH PhD student)**, Ma X, Jiang S, Gu Y, **Ming Wai Kit (PH)**. Prophylactic Interventions for Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer Risks and Mortality in BRCA1/2 Carriers. *Cancers*. 2023 Dec 24;16(1):103.
- Zhang J, Yu H, Zheng X, **Ming Wai Kit (PH)**, Lak YS, Tom KC, Lee A, Huang H, Chen W, Lyu J, Deng L. Deep-learning-based survival prediction of patients with lower limb melanoma. *Discover Oncology*. 2023 Dec;14(1):1-3.
- Cao L, Liang S, Yu X, Guan B, Yang Q, **Ming Wai Kit (PH), Chen Y(PH PhD student)**. Change in Mineral Status After Bariatric Surgery: a Meta-analysis. *Obesity Surgery*. 2023 Oct 23:1-25.
- Yu H, Zhu L, Zhang J, Zheng S, **Ming Wai Kit (PH)**, IP CC, Jiang Y, Chen W, Wu S, Lyu J, Deng L. Joinpoint Regression Analysis of Recent Trends In Desmoplastic Malignant Melanoma Incidence And Mortality: 15-Year Multicentre Retrospective Study.
- Wang X, Wu Y, Miao J, Pu K, **Ming Wai Kit (PH)**, Zang S. Factors associated with eating behaviors in older adults from a socioecological model perspective. *BMC Public Health*. 2023 Sep 5;23(1):1726.

### Service

- **Prof. Ming Wai Kit** has been appointed by the Chief Executive as a member of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee of the HKSAR government from 1 Jan 2024. <https://www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202312/29/P2023122900252.htm?fontSize=1>

### Media

#### **Media interview with Prof. Dirk Pfeiffer**

- SCMP published on 6 Jan 2024 "Can Hong Kong learn to live with African swine fever? Expert says mass pig culls not the answer amid largest recorded outbreak" <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/3247500/can-hong-kong-learn-live-african-swine-fever-expert-says-mass-pig-culls-not-answer-amid-largest>

- Commercial Radio Hong Kong published on 7 Jan 2024 “<https://www.881903.com/news/amp/local/2516659>”
- The Standard published on 8 Jan 2024 “Farms 'must tread carefully on swine flu’” <https://www.thestandard.com.hk/section-news/section/4/259314/Farms-%27must-tread-carefully-on-swine-flu%27>
- The RTHK Backchat interview on 9 Jan 2024 on African swine fever <https://www.rthk.hk/radio/radio3/programme/backchat/episode/928090>

**CityU PH and Peking University collaborate on 2024 Psychology and Behaviour Investigation of Chinese Residents**

Since 2020, the Department of Social Medicine and Health Education in the School of Public Health of Peking University has conducted studies on the mental health and behaviour of Chinese residents. More than 100 papers have been published based on the data collected, using a scientific approach to examine various facets of public mental health, including anxiety, depression, stress, personality and self-efficacy, as well as behaviours, such as smoking, alcohol consumption, physical activity, diet and sleep.

For the 2024 study, CityU will expand the study area by including the concept of One Health (that is, the interdependence of the health of humans, animals and the environment) to explore topics such as how pets affect the mental health of humans. The study scope will also be expanded to include Hong Kong and Macao. The survey initially covered only 3,000 residents in 30 cities, but it will cover over 50,000 residents in more than 150 cities next year.

The launch ceremony was attended by **Professor Vanessa Barrs**, Dean of CityU’s Jockey Club College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences, **Professor Patrick Butaye**, Head of CityU’s Department of Infectious Diseases and Public Health, **Professor Julia Beatty**, Chair Professor of CityU’s Department of Veterinary Clinical Science, **Professor Ming Wai-kit** in CityU’s Department of Infectious Diseases and Public Health, and **Mr Wu Yibo** and **Ms Liu Diyue**, Project Leaders. Joining the ceremony online was Professor Sun Xinying, Vice Director of Peking University’s Department of Social Medicine and Health Education in the School of Public Health.

<https://www.cityu.edu.hk/media/news/2023/12/19/cityu-and-pekings-university-collaborate-2024-psychology-and-behaviour-investigation-chinese-residents>



## Event



**Global Synergy for Animal Welfare:  
From Research to Impact**  
Free Online Workshop  
**June 19-20, 2024**  
**SAVE THE DATES**

Animal welfare science is linked to research impact through its ability to inform and influence public opinion, practices and policies. Ultimately, animal welfare research impact is measured by its ability to drive positive changes in the way animals are treated, ensuring their wellbeing. There has been a huge increase in animal welfare research over recent decades and thus we might expect major improvements to global welfare standards. However, these improvements have been much slower than expected. The reasons for the gap between animal welfare research and its impact are multifactorial; however, a primary reason is the challenge of translating research findings into practical applications. While researchers may generate valuable insights and recommendations, implementing these changes in real-world settings is complex. Additionally, there may be resistance from individuals, industries and governments to adopt new practices that incur additional costs or require big changes to existing systems. It is therefore essential for researchers to work together with stakeholders in order to drive impactful changes, but opportunities for the various groups to meet are limited.

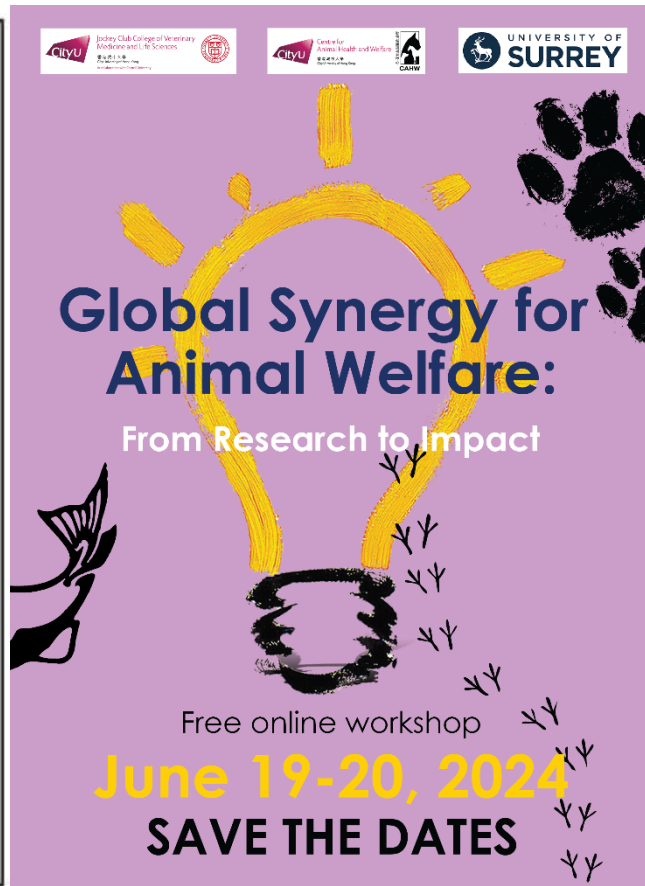
Addressing animal welfare research and impact gaps requires collaborative efforts between researchers, advocacy groups, industry and policymakers. Improved communication, knowledge translation, and funding allocation can help bridge the gaps and ensure that more welfare research has meaningful impact on improving animal lives. Thus, we are organising a global meeting to bring these hitherto divergent groups together in one forum. The meeting will allow us to develop a greater understanding of how to improve communication and sharing of knowledge, in order to ensure greater impact, better lives for animals, and for the people who depend on them.

We will invite contributions from animal welfare scientists, animal welfare NGOs, industry and governments, which demonstrate clear examples of where research has resulted in improved animal lives. We will also feature contributions that focus on how the links between research and impact can be improved.

**Potential Topics**  
Aquatic Animal Welfare and Impact  
Farm Animal Welfare and Impact  
Companion Animal Welfare and Impact (including Exotic Pets)  
Laboratory Animal Welfare and Impact  
Sport and Entertainment Animal Welfare and Impact  
Wildlife Welfare and Impact (in the Field, or Captivity)  
Working Animal Welfare and Impact

The two-day workshop will be held online during Central European summer daytime, June 19-20, 2024. With thanks to our funders: Centre for Animal Health and Welfare, City University of Hong Kong; Jockey Club College of Veterinary Medicine and Life Sciences, City University of Hong Kong; University of Surrey, UK. [More information to follow in the next weeks. Contact: animalwelfareimpact@gmail.com](mailto:animalwelfareimpact@gmail.com)

Organisers: Dr. Alan McElligott, Dr. Elaine Brinker, Dr. Kate Ploy, Dr. Xin-Hui, Dr. Hannah Murray, Dr. Matthew Parker, Dr. Becky Perkins, Dr. Tamara Tashch  
05/01/2024



**Global Synergy for Animal Welfare:  
From Research to Impact**

Free online workshop  
**June 19-20, 2024**  
**SAVE THE DATES**

## Research Grants

Notable grants application deadlines upcoming:

1. [Technological Innovation 2030 – Prevention Research on Cancer, Cardiovascular, Respiratory and Metabolic Diseases Major Program 2023](#) 科技创新 2030 — “癌症、心脑血管、呼吸和代谢性疾病防治研究”重大项目  
[Deadline: 21 January 2024](#)
2. [Professional Services Advancement Support Scheme \(PASS\)](#)  
[Deadline: 14 February 2024](#)
3. [Health and Medical Research Fund \(HMRF\)](#)  
[Deadline: 18 March 2024](#)

For more information on Research Grants  
[Research Grants and Contracts Office](#)

# Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

## Upcoming DEI Events

### Workshop on Promoting Culturally Inclusive Workplace



**Date : 7 March 2024 (Thursday)**

**Time : 4 - 5pm**

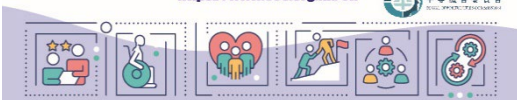
**Venue: Online via Zoom**

**Free Registration: <https://forms.gle/syLRQ3A9zQWDTW4A>**



**Provided by Equal Opportunities Commission, HK**

<https://www.eoc.org.hk/en>



### The Roslin Institute - Athena Swan Gold

**Prof. Jayne Hope  
The Roslin Institute**

#### Abstract:

In general, fewer female scientists are promoted, and progress, to the most senior levels in academia, compared to males. This is a so-called 'leaky pipeline'. At The Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh we are committed to improving gender balance and equality for all staff and students. This seminar will focus on the Roslin Institute and its research culture. Prof. Hope will introduce their approach to gender equality and the Athena Swan charter, including their Gold award. Furthermore, she will share her research journey and personal commitment to advancing research culture and equality, diversity, and inclusion.

#### Speaker's Biography:

Prof. Jayne Hope obtained a degree in Biological Sciences from the University of Birmingham, UK, and a Ph.D. from the University of Manchester, UK. She then conducted postdoctoral research at Kings College, London, UK, and subsequently at the Institute for Animal Health, Compton, UK. She joined The Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh, UK, in 2011 and was awarded a personal chair in immunology in 2017. Her research group studies cellular immune responses in cattle with a particular focus on understanding the role of innate cells in driving natural and vaccine-induced immunity. Prof. Hope was appointed Deputy Director of The Roslin Institute responsible for Culture and Diversity in 2019. She is also the Associate Dean for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion for the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies.  
<https://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/jayne-hope>



**Prof. Jayne Hope**

**Date: February 08, 2024 (Thu)**

**Time: 4pm HKT**

**on Zoom**

**! FREE REGISTRATION !**



### Workshop on Promoting Culturally Inclusive Workplace

**Date: 7 March 2024**

**Speaker: Equal Opportunities Commission HK**

**Register: [Link](#)**

### The Roslin Institute - Athena Swan Gold

**Date: 8 February 2024**

**Speaker: Prof. Jayne HOPE**

**Register: [Link](#)**

### Hong Kong Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Summit

**Date: 1 February 2024**

**Location: Hong Kong Ocean Park Marriott Hotel**

**Register: [Link](#)**



Click on the events tab on our DEI website for the full list of events  
<https://www.cityu.edu.hk/jcc/about-us/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>

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