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HUMAN GERM CELLS DO NOT HAVE TO MIGRATE IN EMBRYONIC DEVELOPMENT.

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Much is written about the independent migration of cells during normal embryonic development: indeed, cell migration has become a dogma of modern embryology teaching and research. However, for any putative migration, few authors give a frame of reference for the movement or a speed; both are necessary if we are to have faith in the dogma. Since it is now known (i) that sclerotomal cells do not migrate to the vicinity of the notochord, (ii) that cranial neural crest cells do not migrate to form mesectoderm, and (iii) that vagal neural crest cells need not migrate to reach the rectal submucosa, it was decided to test the evidence for the migration of human germ cells. A re-examination of Witschi's (1948) paper in the context of the global growth movements of the embryo suggests that the displacement of germ cells can be explained without recourse to the *deus ex machina* of independent cell migration. There appears to be a difference between the behaviour of germ cells in glass dishes and their behaviour *in vivo*. The study of human embryos forces us to re-examine evidence for the active migration of germ cells in other species, such as the mouse where it is possible that growth movements have been ignored in the interpretation.