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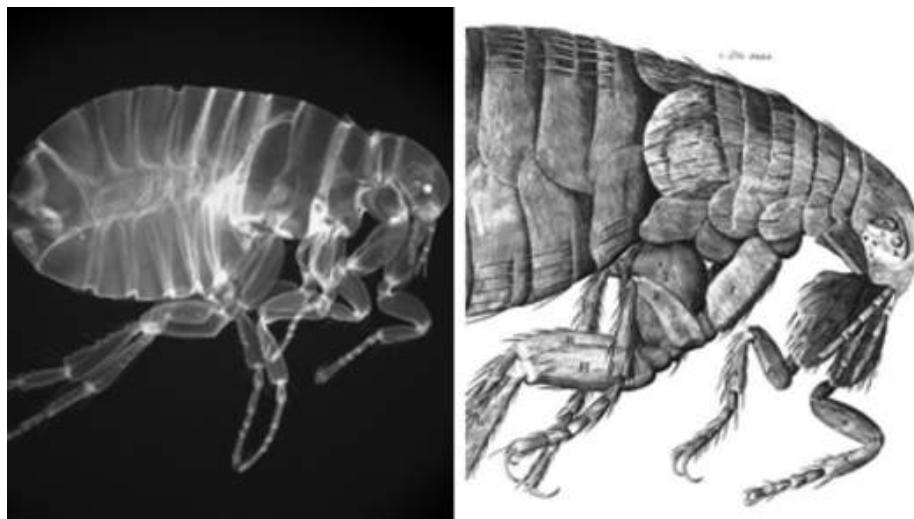
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Giant New Lens Shows Minutest Of Cells

11:34am UK, Friday 02 July 2010



A flea (l) seen from the giant lens and (r) a 1660 engraving of a human flea

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By Lulu Sinclair, Sky News Online

Scientists have come up with a giant-lensed microscope to allow them to see the minutest of cells.

The "Mesolens" microscope is described as revolutionary because of how it could transform laboratory researchers' ability to look at living cells.

They will now be able to see them at a level never seen before, the scientists say.

The team of Medical Research Council scientists, led by Dr William Amos developed the microscope in response to a growing research need to examine larger and larger tissue samples, in particular early stage genetically modified mouse embryos.

"We have worked for more than 20 years on the development of new optical systems for biomedical research," said Dr Amos.

"A new microscope opens up many new possibilities for viewing large volumes of living tissue without sacrificing clarity or losing the ability to perceive depth, which has been a major problem with existing microscopes.

"We hope that researchers will be able to benefit from this new technology from next year."

The 6mm embryos play a crucial step in the identification of future treatments for diseases such as cancer.

Scientists say existing microscopes make the process long and laborious but they hope, with the new machine, they can now see the embryos instantly.

The microscope is on show at the [Royal Society's Summer Science Exhibition](#) until Sunday.

The exhibition this year celebrates the setting up of the society, 350 years ago, which gained royal status under Charles II two years later.

Among its founding members were Sir Christopher Wren - who gave the society's first lecture, on astronomy - and scientist and philosopher Robert Boyle.

Sir Isaac Newton, who discovered gravity, was the Royal Society's President from 1703 until his death in 1727.

Since its foundation, fellows have given the world many other exciting scientific discoveries including evolution, the electron and - one of the most important additions to the modern age - the internet.

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