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**Blood and Blastocysts: mathematical ecological thinking on developmental biology**

**Abstract**

In this talk I will review some recent work on the theoretical developmental biology. In particular I will introduce the idea that ecological thinking particularly ideas from population biology are crucially important in understanding the dynamics of stem cell systems and the allocation of cells in early mammalian blastocysts. I will use modelling approaches and data to stimulate discussion at this interface between maths, ecology and developmental biology.