

NEWS IN BRIEF

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News in brief

critics pounce on bubble-fusion blunder

A group of researchers making high-profile claims about fusion energy has admitted to accidentally using equipment different from that reported in their most recent paper.

In January, Rusi Taleyarkhan and his team published the latest in a series of papers that claimed to see neutrons characteristic of fusion reactions coming from collapsing bubbles in organic fluids. Such 'bubble fusion' has been hailed as a source of cheap, renewable energy, but there have been serious questions about the work's validity (see <http://www.nature.com/news/2006/060306/full/060306-1.html>).

The paper says that four independent detection methods were used, one of which was a boron trifluoride gas proportional tube. The erratum, published by Taleyarkhan and his colleagues in *Physical Review Letters* on 2 May, reveals that this part of the apparatus was actually a lithium iodide crystal scintillation detector. Critics interpret the admission as a sign that the group's fusion claims are further unravelling.

Taleyarkhan, who is based at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, says the equipment error does not affect the data, analysis or conclusions. A university review of the work is due by 1 June.

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