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Time to rethink cell senescence? Lessons from the SenCat project

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Cellular senescence is a key biological process where cells respond to damage by inducing a particular state of growth arrest and active secretion of signaling molecules. It is crucial for understanding aging, as the buildup of senescent cells is a hallmark of this natural organismal decline. However, there is no clear agreement on which markers truly define a senescent cell, making their identification in complex biological systems challenging. To tackle this, we embarked on the SenCat project, profiling various senescent cell types to identify reliable markers. Our findings not only suggest better ways to identify senescent cells but also provide new insights that may reshape how we view the overall process of cellular senescence.