Dear colleagues,

Some years ago a close colleague patented a new process for measuring extremely small concentrations of analytes in solution.  We had successfully demonstrated the use of the technique to detect the presence of concentrations so small that traditional techniques of measurement would have altered the concentration that was to be measured.

The patent was licensed by a company involved in sensitive measurement, but it soon became clear that their interest was in preventing a competing technique from coming to market.  I have since learned that this practice is common.  It is, of course, completely counter to the reason that the idea of patents was developed in the first place, and is in opposition to the idea of bringing lab innovations to market.

Fixing this would, I imagine, require a change in patent legislation, and I have no idea about what other unintended consequences might arise from changing patent law so as to reduce or eliminate the practice of preventing competition from reaching the market.  But it needs to be considered.

Best regards,

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