

To whom it may concern,

After carefully considering the issues at stake, may I respectfully say that I am appalled at the recommendations of the Lockhart Committee.

I am opposed to

(i) research using excess Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) embryos,

(ii) Research involving fertilisation of human eggs by human sperm up to, but not including, the first cell division, or to any other stage,

(iii) Inter-species fertilisation and development up to, but not including, the first cell division, for testing gamete viability to assist ART training and practice,

(iv) using fresh ART embryos that are diagnosed by pre-implantation genetic diagnosis according to the ART guidelines as being unsuitable for implantation,

(v) transfer of human somatic cell nuclei into animal oocytes for the creation and use of human embryo clones for research, training and clinical application, including the production of human embryonic stem cells, irrespective of whether the activity satisfies all the criteria outlined in the amended Act and irrespective of whether these embryos are implanted into the body of a woman or allowed to develop for more than fourteen days or not.

These recommendations would give a foot in the door to any cell research of any sort. It is just like a frog boiling in water. The poor frog doesn't know that it is being manipulated into giving up its life while it gradually warms up, as the changes are so small.

Human beings are not commodities to be used, even for an apparent 'good' purpose.

Human embryos obtained in vitro are human beings and subjects with rights. Their dignity and right to life must be respected from the first moment of their existence. It is immoral to produce human embryos destined to be exploited as disposable 'biological material'.

The child has the right to be conceived, carried in the womb, brought into the world and brought up within marriage: it is through the secure and recognised relationship to his or her own parents that the child can discover his or her own identity and achieve his or her own proper human development.

Research should be restricted to adult stem cells.

Despite all the hype surrounding embryonic stem cell research, and the financial rewards associated with it, not a single successful treatment has resulted. On the other hand, the use of adult stem cells has achieved remarkable success without any of the ethical problems associated with destroying embryos.

Brain Cancer, Ovarian Cancer, Lymphoma, Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Multiple Sclerosis, Crohn's Disease, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Systemic Lupus, Stroke, Parkinson's Disease and Limb Gangrene, are just a few of the list of over seventy successful treatments using adult stem cells.

Such research into embryonic stem cells is therefore an abuse and waste of tax payers' resources. Any government that goes down this track should be criminally liable for such fraudulent use of taxpayers' money. Such money has only been entrusted to them to manage.