



27 September 2006.

**Submission to the Community Affairs Committee
Australian Senate**

community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au

Re Lockhart Review

Medicine With Morality was set up early in 2006 by doctors concerned with the drift of medical ethics away from what we consider to be moral absolutes concerning human life. The attached *manifesto* embodies these absolutes and provides an ethical framework for scientific advance. We believe this to be consistent with the time-honoured standards enshrined in the Hippocratic Oath – part of which is inscribed in the letterhead design above – and that great dictum of medicine *Primum non Nocere* (*first, do no harm*).

In affirming the value of human life we express our serious concern regarding the recommendations of the *Lockhart Legislation Review Committee*. We believe that in the pursuit of medical science there are boundaries that should not be crossed and procedures that should not be done regardless of potential benefit.

Relevant to the Lockhart Review such boundaries include:

- 1. The deliberate creation of human life for its destruction**
- 2. Cloning by Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT)**
- 3. The placing of human genetic material into eggs of animal origin.**

As is clear from the *Manifesto*, the doctors of *Medicine With Morality* are opposed to any legislation that permits crossing of these boundaries.

We state the biologically obvious fact that a cloned human embryo formed by the technique of SCNT is *human life* regardless of whether it is created for 'therapeutic' or reproductive purposes. We maintain that human life has intrinsic value simply because it is human and that the moral status and value of the embryo is not determined by whether it is intended to be implanted. Respect for human life must include all that are vulnerable, impaired or dependent.

The increasingly apparent advantage of *non-embryonic sources* of stem cells over embryonic sources renders embryo destruction unnecessary. Others will make the case for this. Suffice it to say that we are aware of and excited by the advances that have been made. We believe that medical research in Australia has a bright future without cloning and that research which pays respect to all human life will in turn be honoured.

We are thankful that the Australian Government supported the United Nations Declaration on Human Cloning and we ask for all Australian legislation to be consistent with that Declaration.

Yours faithfully,

The doctors of *Medicine With Morality*

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Medicine with Morality – a Manifesto of Human Life for the 21st Century.

We affirm that human life begins when a cell containing human chromosomes first has the ability to replicate and differentiate into individual tissues, as occurs at fertilisation. The genetic pattern of such a cell is uniquely human and determines its adult characteristics.

We deny that any other definition of the beginning of human life is acceptable. We believe this to be a line that must not be crossed.

We affirm that human life has intrinsic value at every stage of life and dependency from its beginning to its natural end and must be protected against experimentation or exploitation.

We deny that concepts of personhood and self-awareness, being arbitrary and capable of varying definition, are acceptable as indicators of the presence or absence of human life.

We affirm further that the human embryo, being human life in the truest sense, has intrinsic value and that the extraction of stem cells from it is unacceptable.

We deny that cloning technology is acceptable whether for so-called therapeutic or reproductive purposes. We also deny that fertilisation attempted between human and non-human cells (to create a 'chimera') is acceptable.

We affirm from the evidence of many scientists that stem-cell research on adult tissues and other non-embryonic tissues (e.g. umbilical cord) already has proven benefits and safety as well as increasing promise for the future and that research on embryos is not as necessary as other scientists make out.

We deny that it is acceptable to do harmful research on human life at any stage regardless of impairment or impending death or to terminate such life before its natural end. We further deny that it is acceptable to do destructive research on so-called 'spare embryos'.

We affirm our right – and indeed obligation – to speak for the future of our society. We assert that 'natural' Law is present in the heart of mankind; that this law exhorts us to protect the innocent and helpless and to uphold the sanctity, preciousness and intrinsic value of life at all stages. We further assert that these are eternal and immutable principles.

We assert our right and obligation to practice medicine according to our conscience. We will not engage in or facilitate procedures or practices that we believe are inconsistent with the above manifesto.

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