

SUBMISSION FROM BRIAN MAGREE

The failure of the Lockhart Review

The following points should be noted with respect to the Lockhart Review Report:

1. Of more than 1000 submissions received, most were opposed to all forms of human cloning or use of human embryos in research.
2. The Report based its recommendations to allow human cloning, on fraudulent South Korean scientific data obtained via the Australian Stem Cell Centre submission.
3. Long held community standards based on The Nuremberg Code of medical ethics,(1949) which included the consent of the subject, were not considered as the Report adopted its own ethical position. Its ethic discriminated between embryos that matter-those being brought to birth- and the cloned embryos which don't matter to anybody. It saw no wrong in the use of cloned embryos for experimentation.
4. While the committee had before it ample evidence of successful cures and therapies from adult stem cell research it persisted in recommending the failed embryonic stem cell approach.
5. The Report indicated that the committee went beyond its brief in proposing a radical research agenda which included allowing the creation of human/animal hybrid embryos.

Noteworthy aspects of Professor Hwang Woo-suk's fraudulent embryonic stem cell research

1. Prof Hwang's fake research gave false hope to patients of debilitating conditions. The proponents of embryonic stem cell research want the community to forget the Hwang scandal while they perpetuate the myth of potential cures from embryonic stem cell research.
2. Apart from accusations of professional misconduct, The disgraced professor was also accused of misuse of state funds.
3. The Australian Stem Cell Centre's submission to the Lockhart Committee depended on the South Korean scientific group's flawed research and had apparently exchanged scientists with the group.

The Australian ethical standard based on the democratic tradition

Australian ethical standards are based on respect for the sanctity of all human life. This is the legacy of the long democratic tradition under which parliamentary representatives operate. The democratic tradition grants the human embryo a value equal to that of all other human lives. While the Lockhart committee admits that cloning creates a human embryo, it doesn't grant all embryos equal status. The committee makes the undemocratic distinction between embryos that will be brought to birth and the sub class of embryos that will not be brought to birth.

The ethical standard based on the totalitarian tradition

The totalitarian tradition enables discrimination against individual human beings. The Nazis were able, with their policy of creating sub classes, to justify using human beings of what they saw as a sub class for experimental purposes. The Chinese government sanctions the killing of the sub class -political prisoners- in order to be able to sell body parts. The unelected Lockhart committee should not be permitted to introduce the totalitarian approach to valuing human life, into Australia.

The positive effect of the democratic tradition on the Australian attitude to human life

1. Advances in medicine have enabled doctors to preserve life in extraordinary circumstances.
2. There is a generosity which pervades the community whereby people consent to give freely what they can to enhance the health of others. This is most visible in blood, umbilical cord, bone marrow and organ donations.
3. The "consent" element in the democratic tradition has led to very successful adult stem cell technology. This form of research is both ethically acceptable and is responsible so far for at least 70 cures for debilitating diseases and conditions.

Conclusion

Federal Parliament was unanimous in its banning of human cloning in 2002. The Lockhart Report is a baseless document in that it can quote no genuine confirmed scientific advances attributable to embryonic stem cell research. The Report goes beyond its terms of reference in advocating a radical agenda which includes the creation of human/animal hybrid embryos. The report has ignored the dramatic advances made in the adult stem cell area. The Lockhart Review and its Report recommendations should be rejected out of hand.

Private members' bills based on the Lockhart Report are therefore equally flawed and their authors should be castigated for their efforts to take the Australian Parliament in a totalitarian direction.

Please retain the ban on the cloning of human embryos.

Yours faithfully

Brian Magree