

SUBMISSION:

HUMAN EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH AND 'THERAPEUTIC' CLONING - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LOCKHART COMMITTEE

I am writing to you to ask that you think very carefully about the following issues before voting about embryonic stem cell research and 'therapeutic' cloning.

1. If **adult stem cells** are proving to be amazingly successful in fighting over 70 diseases including Brain Cancer, Ovarian Cancer, Lymphoma, Hodgkin's Lymphoma, Multiple Sclerosis, Crohn's Disease, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Stroke, Parkinson's Disease, Systemic Lupus and Limb Gangrene and human embryonic stem cell research has achieved nothing at all, then adult stem cell research should be given more funding and attention and human embryonic stem cell research should be stopped.

2. Human embryonic stem cell research requires the destruction of the embryo which is a human life at it's earliest stage – an embryonic baby- as we all were. It is immoral to produce human embryonic babies destined to be exploited as disposable "biological material" and mixed with animal eggs for experimentation.

Robert Lanza of Advanced Cell Technology Inc. in California recently claimed that it is possible to extract a single cell from an embryo without destroying that embryo. He failed to mention that **none** of the sixteen embryos he used survived the process.

3. The Lockhart Committee has recommended among other things, that **animal oocytes (eggs) be permitted to overcome the shortage of human eggs.** The Committee also recommended a 'more **flexible** system where the Licensing Committee would be able to **grant licences for research that is not expressly permitted** by the Acts or the regulations' provided that the said Committee present some kind of report to the NHMRC and parliament to protect researchers from prosecution. They want to be a law unto themselves, to have a free reign to do whatever they like. There are now many instances of unscrupulous companies making money at the expense of human health and life. eg. Union Carbide, Cigarette Companies, James Hardie Industries and Monsanto with Genetically Modified seeds as in Eastern India where 500,000 farmers using GM corn seeds had a failed crop of huge corn plants with no corn grain in them and recently a GM spinach which recently resulted in many people suffering from food poisoning as it carried the Ecoli virus.

4. Senator Stott Despoja's cloning Bill legalises the mix of human and animal genetic material in the same embryo, in doing so, she ignores the specific advice of the nation's chief scientist, Jim Peacock, who says that the use of animal eggs as part of therapeutic cloning should be banned. Recommendation 17 of the Report "Certain inter-species fertilization and development up to the first cell division should be permitted." Recommendation 24 states "In order to reduce the need for human oocytes (eggs) transfer from human somatic cell nuclei into animal oocytes should be allowed, under licence, for the creation and use of human embryo clones for research. They "promise" they won't implant these into the body of a woman and it will be not allowed to develop for more than 14 days- it will be killed. The Lockhart Report specifically calls for human – animal embryo clones relying on the Korean cloning research which was later found to be fraudulent. They seem to realise the danger here but want to play with fire anyway without restriction. Sanity and any moral or ethical concern seems to have gone out the minds of these people. The dollar sign appears to be paramount. The UN General Assembly passed a political

declaration last year calling on all member states to avoid **all forms of human cloning.**

5. It is not beyond unscrupulous companies to use women as guinea pigs, in return for financial incentives for the life threatening "discomforts" of drugs given to the women to help hyper-stimulate ovulation for egg harvesting. Women in England are already being paid to undergo IVF treatment to donate their eggs for research cloning. Women in the 3rd world countries will be the next unsuspecting targets were this permitted. If politicians pretend to speak about the protection of women's reproductive health and support this legislation they will be seen as hypocritical.

Katrina George, a member of the group "Hands Off Our Ovaries" explained that cloning human embryos to obtain stem cells requires a large supply of ova and that the methods used to harvest them posed grave risks to women's health. George argued "Cloning always amounts to the commodification of women's bodies. Politicians and scientists must not use women as guinea pigs in a technology that has no proven benefits."

6. Why is a human embryo in a dish in a laboratory? To be put together in a dish in a laboratory by third persons, either by fusion of sperm and egg, or by cloning, is a gross violation of the embryo's human rights. To be further exploited and subsequently destroyed through harvesting his/her cells, is something no civilized community would allow to happen. To cover up the truth and the depth of seriousness of this matter is to become uncivilized and to disregard the rights and dignity of all human beings. The words "some ethical concerns" are used to put down the serious nature of these issues.

7. A human person is made in the image and likeness of God and at conception is a fertilized ovum. Are you glad that your parents did not donate you to a laboratory to be used for research when you were an embryonic baby, to be dissected and mixed with animal material for experimental purposes? Would you consider sacrificing your children for this research because it might help someone else when adult stem cell research has a proven track record in saving human lives without killing any innocent human embryonic babies.

8. Human embryonic stem cell researchers are willing, not only to kill the embryo, but also to make wildly extravagant, and sometimes fraudulent, claims regarding the potential benefits of their research. Elements pushing for this new market of embryonic babies to be killed for research and use these astounding arguments about how valuable this will be in saving lives carries with it a sinister agenda, not caring what it entails or what the consequences for the future of humanity as long as it makes money for them. Just like the cigarette companies, James Hardie Industries, Union Carbide and the like have knowingly done with poisonous methods and products. Do you want to serve this agenda and de-humanize our society and yourself in the process as you will be partly to blame for this genetic Auschwitz if you vote in support of them. Will Eugenics be spelt G-E-N-E-T- I-C-S if the power is given to some scientists who want to promote a culture of death without restraint, supported by the law which you will be voting on?

Adult stem cell research is saving lives now without killing innocent human life. Why not work to promote greater funding for this?

There is nothing to be gained by allowing destructive embryonic stem cell research by scientists who apparently want unfettered access, i.e., no lawful & moral/ethical restraints on their research. No other area of life is permitted this type of freedom. Laws should be in place to protect all members of our society especially the most helpless, voiceless and vulnerable. We are a compassionate people in Australia as a rule- let's not destroy this very important part of the Australian character. Let's work to build a culture of life and protect all human life from the moment of conception to natural death.

Yours sincerely

Purita Mong