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Denker's "ethical Dilema" Re Embryonic Stem Cells

posted by **Susan Fraser** on 26 Jun 2007 at 4:33 pm

H.W. Denker, Denker points out an ethical problem in relation to consent given by parents considering donating their embryos to make human embryonic stem cells:

□As embryonic stem cells can be propagated indefinitely and can thus be distributed worldwide and grow for long periods, the risk that they could theoretically also be used for reproductive cloning of human beings in an unforeseeable future must be included in the information given to patients when informed consent is obtained in the course of embryo donation.□ 1

1. Denker, H.W. Potentiality of embryonic stem cells: an ethical problem even with alternative stem cell sources. Journal of medical ethics 32, 665-671 (2006).

This is a free article: <http://jme.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/32/11/665>

While it should have been obvious that somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) is only one way of creating a clone, and that a more successful method would use embryonic stem cells (ESCs) instead of somatic (or body) cells, it has taken an expert in human development (H.W. Denker) to point this out. It should have been obvious because the test for totipotency of ESCs is to create an embryo from one ESC.

And that is why anyone who donates their gametes or embryos for ESC research must be informed that any resulting ESC lines created using their gametes could potentially live for a very long time, and could be used in □reproductive cloning□ in the future.

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