



“As to diseases ,make a habit of two things —
to help, or at least *do no harm.*”
— Hippocrates, *The Epidemics* —

THE “POLITICAL SCIENCE” OF STEM CELLS LESSON 11: NOT MONTHS OR DAYS, BUT DECADES

Congress may vote soon on whether to divert taxpayer dollars toward stem cell research that requires destroying live human embryos. In the campaign to promote such federal subsidies, political hype has far distanced itself from what science tells us. This series will help members of Congress distinguish mere politics from science.

POLITICAL:

“People are dying from diseases and medical conditions that might be cured through embryonic stem-cell research. For these people, every month matters. And every day of delay by the Senate has life-and-death consequences.” Sen. Tom Harkin in *Roll Call*, Sept. 23, 2005

SCIENCE:

“Much of the California electorate was sold last year on the idea that human embryonic stem cells might be turned into amazing cures for incurable diseases, propelling Proposition 71 to easy victory in the Nov. 2004 election. Now, it’s increasingly clear that stem cell transplants for diabetes or Parkinson’s or Alzheimer’s are nowhere close, maybe decades away.”

- Science writer Carl T. Hall, “Stem Cell leaders to talk strategy at conference,” *The San Francisco Chronicle*, Sept. 30, 2005, page B4

“One of the problems is that in order to persuade the public that we must do this work; we often go rather too far in promising what we might achieve... I am not entirely convinced that embryonic stem cells will, in my lifetime, and possibly anybody’s lifetime for that matter, be holding quite the promise that we desperately hope they will.”

- British stem cell expert Professor Lord Winston, Lecture at Gresham College, June 20, 2005, www.gresham.ac.uk/printtranscript.asp?EventId=347

“[I]t is necessary that prospective [egg] donors recognize the large gap between research and therapy... [R]esearchers must make every effort to communicate to these volunteers that it is extremely unlikely that their contributions will directly benefit themselves or their loved ones. Also, it is nearly certain that the clinical benefits of the research are years or maybe decades away. This is a message that desperate families and patients will not want to hear.”

- David Magnus and Mildred K. Cho of Stanford University, “Issues in Oocyte Donation for Stem Cell Research,” *Science*, 17 June 2005, p. 1748

“[R]esearchers say it could be decades before embryonic stem cells cure anything.”

- Helen Fields, “Reigniting the Stem Cell Debate,” *U.S. News and World Report*, June 6, 2005, www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/050606/6politics.b1.htm

For more information to help distinguish politics from science on stem cell research, see our web site at www.stemcellresearch.org.

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FOUNDING MEMBERS

Kevin Fitzgerald, S.J., Ph.D.

Dr. Lauler Professor for Catholic Health Care Ethics;
Associate Professor of Oncology,
Georgetown University,

C. Christopher Hook, M.D.

Hematology/Medical Oncology,
The Mayo Clinic (MN);
Chair, Mayo Clinical Ethics Council,
Mayo Reproductive Medicine Advisory Board and DNA Research Committee

Ralph Miech, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Professor (Emeritus)
of Pharmacology
Brown University School of Medicine

Robert D. Orr, M.D.

Director of Ethics, FAHC
University of Vermont
College of Medicine

David Prentice, Ph.D.

Senior Fellow for Life Sciences
Family Research Council
Visiting Professor
Center for Clinical Bioethics
Georgetown University

Frank E. Young, M.D., Ph.D.

Former Commissioner,
U.S. Food and Drug Administration;
Dean Emeritus,
School of Medicine and Dentistry,
University of Rochester;
Director, Reformed Theological
Seminary, Metro Washington

Joseph Zanga, M.D.

Jefferson-Pilot Distinguished Professor
in Primary Care; Assistant Dean for
Generalist Programs; Professor of
Pediatrics, Brody School of Medicine
East Carolina University

1100 H Street, NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005
PH: 202-347-6840
Fax: 202-347-6849
www.stemcellresearch.org