

Cloning Human Embryos Becomes Dangerous Reality

Scientists in Oregon say that they have created cloned human embryos, and then destroyed the embryos to extract embryonic stem cells. The cloning technique is essentially the same one used to create Dolly the cloned sheep, with some modifications to make cloning work using human eggs and human cells.

This is the first claim of growing human embryonic stem cells from cloned human embryos since the fraudulent claims in 2004 and 2005 of Korean scientist Hwang Woo-Suk. The report, published online in the journal *Cell*, also highlights the fact that women are a target for raw materials for the cloning technique, since “premium quality” eggs are required to make their human cloning technique work.

Family Research Council Senior Fellow Dr. David Prentice said it is a grave concern that some scientists are still pursuing human cloning, a technology that will open the door to human engineering and a brave, but highly dangerous, new world. As he sees it, human cloning by this technique requires the specific creation of a new individual, albeit cloned, at the embryo stage, using human eggs and human tissue cells.

“Modern science has passed this by, especially in regards to stem cells. Creating and destroying cloned human embryos to extract their embryonic stem cells is unethical, and the entire faulty concept of using the cloning technique has been superseded by uncontroversial techniques,” Prentice says. “Induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells), when done ethically, are more easily and inexpensively created from skin, or any tissue, and have already shown the advantages as laboratory models to study disease and development.

Adult stem cells have already proven to be superior at

achieving treatments for patients, Prentice says. In fact, more than 60,000 people a year around the globe now receive adult stem cell transplants, for dozens of diseases and conditions. Adult stem cells provide not only an ethical source of stem cells but proven practical advantages in terms of patient-specific transplant matching, he continues, and also avoid problems with tumors, which are commonly seen with embryonic stem cells.

“Cloning also requires subjecting young women to the significant health risk of ovarian hyperstimulation, juicing them up with hormones to harvest numerous eggs and risking their health and life in the process. This turns women into providers of a biotech commodity, and makes them a target for exploitation,” Prentice says.

“Given that science has passed cloning by for stem cell production, this announcement seems simply a justification for making clones, and makes reproductive cloning and birth of human clones more likely.”