

# CSBQ Discussion paper

*Approved for website, May 2002*

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(See also [Discussion paper on Stem Cell Research](#))

30<sup>th</sup> May 2002

Dear Member of Parliament,

## **PLEASE SUPPORT ADULT STEM CELL RESEARCH**

As a physician of 30 years experience I have been following the stem cell debate with interest. The facts I read in the scientific journals give a different picture to what has appeared in the general media.

The public has been kept poorly informed by a carefully orchestrated campaign by the IVF embryo industry. The embryo researchers speak only of embryonic sources of stem cells. In fact embryonic stem cells have immune and chemical disadvantages, and are likely to be used only for drug research and toxicology studies. No doubt Big Biotech will make big money in those areas, but embryonic stem cells have achieved nothing to justify the hype about miracle cures. Nobel Prize winner Sir Gustav Nossal suggests that another 10 years study would be needed to make embryonic stem cell therapy both workable and safe.

In contrast, stem cells from “adult” sources (from birth onwards) are already being used to cure disease. Rhys Evans, the Welsh toddler with “bubble boy” immune deficiency, was cured by his own marrow stem cells. French and German trials last year showed that adult stem cells can repair heart muscle after heart attack. An American woman with a damaged spinal cord has regained some movement in her legs and control of her bladder after treatment with her own stem cells. And to quote one patient, “I don’t have to take any anti-rejection medication because the cells are myself.”

It is a scientific fact that human life begins at fertilisation. About 22 hours after the sperm enters the egg, there is a defining moment when the 23 chromosomes of each fuse to form the full human complement of 46 chromosomes. This is syngamy, literally the joining together of the spouses. This is when all the inherited characteristics of the new human life, everything from father’s nose to mother’s bent toes, are determined. Everyone of us spent the first hour of life as a single cell zygote. We share a common link of humanity with these tiny living beings. No wonder that the report of the Senate Select Committee on the Human Embryo Experimentation Bill 1985 decided that we have a duty of guardianship to the human embryo.

There is evidence that some IVF units are already creating “surplus” embryos for research. If embryonic stem cell research becomes lawful, the next step will be reproductive cloning, and then growing human fetuses until their organs are useful. To quote Charles Krauthammer, a member of the US President’s Council on Bioethics, “Once you countenance the creation of human embryos for no other purpose than for their parts, you have crossed a moral frontier.”

I hope that when you have studied this issue you will vote for the safer and more ethical alternative of adult stem cell therapy.

Yours sincerely,

[See also Discussion Paper on Stem Cell Research](#)  
by Dr Rob Pollnitz