

newsletter

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Chile, Morning-After Pill Banned

A Federal court in Santiago has ruled that the morning-after pill is illegal and is not to be distributed in Chile. The reason for this is that it prevents implantation and thus is an abortifacient. Judge Silvia Papa ordered the removal of any drug containing Levonorgesterol, which is the active hormone in the morning-after pill.

South Korea Allows Human Cloning

New guidelines, just finalized by the South Korean government, allow research scientists to clone human embryos and then kill them for their embryonic stem cells.

Australia – No Cloning

The Australian government has decided to support a ban on all forms of human cloning at the United Nations. The recently reelected Prime Minister John Howard changed his country's position to support the coalition of 60 plus nations led the US and Costa Rica against cloning.

Swiss Approve Embryonic Stem Cell Research

By a vote of 66% Swiss voters have approved a law that will allow lethal embryonic stem cell research. The same law bans all human cloning including cloning for research purposes. The intent is to "only" use "spare" IVF embryos. Time will tell.

Impasse On Human Cloning at UN

The debate at the United Nations continues. The Costa Rican resolution co-sponsored by the US and 60 other countries would prohibit human cloning without exception. A measure sponsored by Belgium and 20 other countries would only forbid cloning and then implantation with the expectation of later birth. It would permit research cloning which kills that living human. The impasse continues.

New Zealand

According to the *New Zealand Herald*, (4-Dec., 2004), it will eventually be routine for children to save and store their milk teeth in stem cell banks. Dr. Stan Gronthos has reported that stem cells found in these teeth are more versatile than embryonic stem cells.

France – No Cloning

The French minister of health in July stated, "For the first time, thanks to the law on bioethics, reproductive cloning is very clearly made a crime against the human species and therapeutic cloning an offense. Protecting human embryos is an explicit goal of the civil code." This means human cloning in France is forbidden, not merely for the purpose of carrying to term and delivering, but also in its early stages for research purposes. There seems to be a loophole, however, in that it will be permitted to import human embryo stem cells for research purposes.

WEB SITE ACTIVATED

Due to the wonderful efforts of Mr. Jim Hughes, our delegate from Canada, we now have a website.
The address is www.irtl.net or www.internationalrighttolife.com

Paralyzed Women Walk

We have reports of two more women who had been paralyzed who are now walking because of Adult Stem Cell therapy. Kim Gould, 43 in England was treated with Stem Cells taken from the lining of her nose. She can now crawl and has sensation in her lower back and abdomen. A Korean woman paralyzed for 20 years after an injury to her spinal area, was recently treated with umbilical cord stem cells. Two weeks after the implant she was able to move her hips, in four weeks her feet responded to stimulation and on December 30, she walked at a news conference. This makes four women who were quadriplegics who are now walking after Adult Stem Cell therapy.

British Stem Cell Bank

In May, the world's first stem cell bank was opened in Herefordshire, England. While it will house tens of thousands of adult stem cells, it is also expected to warehouse embryonic stem cells. This means killing a five-day-old living human embryo, cutting him or her open and obtaining these cells which is how embryonic stem cells are obtained.

Adult Stem Cells Repairs Girls Skull

Adult stem cells derived from fat cells in a seven-year-old girl in Germany have been used to successfully regrow a bone defect in her skull. Unlike other bones, which do grow back and replace themselves, skull bones do not. Traditionally, with a skull bone defect, metal plates have been implanted to protect the brain. This little girl had a defect totaling 19 square inches and wore a protective helmet as her brain could be seen through the skin covering the missing bone. The surgeon mixed bits of the child's bone with her own fat-derived stem cells, implanted them and they turned into bone building cells. Note these were not embryonic stem cells obtained from killing another human embryo, but her own cells, therefore, this eliminated any possibility of them being rejected.

Stem Cells Treat Cystic Fibrosis

According to the *Post-Gazette.com*, (21-Dec, 2004), researchers in Pittsburgh and Louisiana have extracted adult stem cells from bone marrow to differentiate into the type of cells that line the lungs and other air passages. These are the very cells that malfunction in cystic fibrosis. Note, these stem cells would be obtained from the very same person who is being treated, so here is another advance for adult stem cells.

New Source of Stem Cells

Researchers in Taiwan have isolated multi-potent cells from a human placenta. These stem cells will be used in the treatment of patients with damaged brains and bones. Assuming success, this would be another available ethical alternative to the use of embryonic stem cells.

Stem Cells Reduce Stroke Damage

Researchers from The Medical College of Georgia and the University of South Florida have used umbilical cord stem cells in patients with strokes. They first administered the drug *mannitol* to breach the blood brain barrier then delivered the stem cells intravenously. This caused the size of the stroke in the animals to decrease by 40%. Note, these were "non-embryonic" or "adult" stem cells.

Adult Stem Cells Treat Leukemia

Bone marrow transplants have been used in the treatment of Leukemia for three decades. Recently the Case Comprehensive Cancer Center in Cleveland has been using adult stem cells from cord blood. Since Leukemia patients frequently are unable to find a suitable marrow donor, the possibility now of using cord cells may well be a new therapeutic breakthrough. Note these are adult stem cells not embryonic stem cells.

Note This Change

Due to the increasing availability of technology as well as the continuing cost and often irregularity of delivery by surface post, we will be switching this newsletter from a printed mailing to an e-mail format. We anticipate completing this by next summer. With the savings in postage cost, we will be able to send this newsletter to many more readers. Accordingly, we ask the following:

- Please send us your e-mail address. Our e-mail address is: info@lifeissues.org
- In the event you do not have access to e-mail and wish to have us continue to mail this surface post, please mail us your postal address.

“Value Voters,” Backed President Bush on Abortion

As reported on *Lifenews.com*, (28-Dec., 2004), we note that since exit polling in the presidential election showed that a significant percentage of voters cast their votes based on moral value issues, pro-life groups have made the case that President Bush was helped in his victory over John Kerry because of the abortion issue. A new nationwide Harris Poll shows that they appear to be right. The survey found that 45 percent of voters believe that moral values were very important in deciding which candidate to support. As, almost twice as many Bush voters (59%) than Kerry (30%) cited moral values as their top concern. Some 35 percent of voters said value issues were somewhat important while just 12 percent said they were not very important and only 8 percent said they were not at all important. When asked what they meant by moral values, voters were significantly more likely to name pro-life as opposed to support for abortion. Fifteen percent of moral value voters cited opposition to abortion as the value issue while just two percent cited backing abortion. Also, Bush voters were more likely to cite the importance of a pro-life position on abortion (22%) than Kerry voters (3%). Eight percent of value voters cited the abortion issue in general as their top value concern, with nine percent of Bush value voters naming it and four percent of Kerry value voters. Looking at those who named either pro-life views, abortion in

general, or support for abortion, some 25% of value voters cited abortion issues as their top value concern. Overall, value voters who cited abortion issues broke 70-30 percent in favor of President Bush.

Smallest Surviving Baby Healthy

A baby born at 240 grams (8.5 ounces) has survived and is healthy. She was born by caesarean section at her mother's 26th week of pregnancy. Her twin weighted 566 grams (1.25 ounces) at birth and is also healthy. The little girl, named Rumalsa, is certainly not the youngest baby born to survive but may be the smallest one.

Dutch Infanticide

According to the *British Medical Journal*, (11-Sept., 2004) Dutch doctors kill about 100 infants with disabilities every year. Eighty percent of these infants die by the withholding of treatment, 20% by lethal injection. The article also estimates that about 900 cases of non-voluntary euthanasia, (i.e. without the patient's request), are committed every year in the Netherlands upon children and adults.

Dutch Doctors Killing Babies

We also have reports from *The Guardian*, (21-Dec.,2004) that on an average once every month, a doctor in the Netherlands kills a newborn infant. Presumably these are infants with life threatening disabilities, but no one has the right to murder a helpless infant.

Retinoblastoma “Cured” by Killing Embryo

An article in the *Medical Herald* (March 2004) is entitled *New Genetic Engineering Techniques Cure Eye Cancer within the Womb*. This tumor develops in a significant percent of cases where a child has this gene. Such patients are also at increased risks of succumbing to other forms of cancer. But now the scientists at Weill Cornell Medical College (WCMC) have found a way to “cure” such patients. They have done it by employing pre-implantation genetic diagnosis. First, they stimulated the mother’s ovaries and collected the eggs that she produced. These were then fertilized using in-vitro fertilization. A biopsy was performed on a single cell from each embryo created and its DNA examined. Those carrying this gene were then “cured” by killing them. Those not carrying the gene were planted within the mother’s uterus. This study reports on two children, free of the gene, who were born to such a mother. Dr. Antonio Gotto, Dean of WCMC, called this a “breakthrough...a wonderful achievement.”

Your editor’s comment, all other issues aside, is to report not merely the fact that such living embryos were killed because they had a problem, but to also note that we’ve now reached the stage where such killing is described as a “cure”.

Marijuana Equals More Tubal Pregnancies?

Researchers at Vanderbilt U. in Tennessee have published in *Nature Medicine* a study that shows that marijuana alters the muscle contractions that move the new human embryo down the tube prior to implanting in the womb. The researchers concluded that the result might be an increase in the risk of tubal (ectopic) pregnancies.

(Medical News Today, 27-Sept., 2004)

Depo Provera Linked To Bone Density Loss

The US Food and Drug Administration has just issued a “black box warning,” the strongest possible one it can, on the labeling of this drug, noting that extended use of this injectable contraceptive can cause “significant bone density loss.”

Morning After Pills Don’t Reduce Abortions

Researchers at Dundee, Edinburgh and Oxford Universities in Great Britain report that giving women advanced supplies of the morning after pill has not reduced the abortion rate. Eighteen thousand women participated. They conclude that distributing supplies of these pills in advance “maybe be misplaced as a strategy to reduce unintended pregnancy.” (*LifeNews.com*, 6-Jan., 2005)

UNFPA Wants Money for “Health” Services

Joining other organizations asking for money to aid the Tsunami victims, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), says it needs money to establish “basic reproductive health care services.” According to its previous record and manuals this means it wants to distribute “reproductive health kits” to victims of this disaster. These kits contain condoms, abortion drugs and portable self-abortion kits.

Human Life?

A public opinion poll published in *WorldNet Daily*, showed the following. The U.S. public believes that human life is present at:

- A fertilized egg – 58%
- At implantation – 7%
- At viability – 24%
- At birth – 11%