

May 23, 2005

Embryo Stem Cell Final Exam Do You Know What You're Voting On?

Dear Colleague:

Here's a simple, straightforward test I have provided to see if you have a basic understanding on H.R. 810. Prior to casting a vote, test your readiness:

1. How many embryos are truly available from IVF clinics according to the industry itself?
2. How many stem cell lines will IVF embryos create for research purposes?
3. Since immune rejection is an issue with ESC research, how many cell lines do ESC researchers themselves say are needed to establish a bank of immune matches for most potential patients?
4. How many embryos will Question 3 require to achieve this goal?
5. Since current IVF clinics are woefully short of the necessary embryos for most potential patients, where do you propose we look next for additional embryos?
6. At the May 10 press conference, sponsors of H.R. 810 characterized the bill as a "good first step." What are steps two and three?
7. According to an article in *Nature* (May 20, 2005) what is the greatest impediment to ESC research?
8. What is the realistic timeline to achieving ESC treatments for humans? Just around the corner? 20-to-30 years?
9. Who says that cloning human embryos is the "better way" for successful ESC research?
10. Which of the following countries has not banned human cloning: France, Germany, Italy, Canada, U.S., Australia, Denmark?
11. Which country spends more money on ESC research: Britain which formally sanctions the creation and destruction of embryos or the U.S which currently does not fund the creation and destruction of embryos?
12. Has the U.S. government ever sanctioned or funded the destruction of nascent human life? Will H.R. 810 cross that bright red line?

Unless you answered at least 9 correctly, then you are NOT ready to vote "yes" for a Brave New World.

VOTE "NO" on H.R. 810

Dave Weldon M.D.

Answers:

1.) 11,000; 2.) at most 275; 3.) hundreds of thousands; 4.) millions; 5.) proponents will next suggest creating embryos for destruction; 6.) Creating embryos specifically for research and human cloning; 7.) Patents and payment demands from ESC patent holders like Univ of Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation; 8.) "the routine utilization of human stem cells for medicine is 20-30 years hence. The timeline to commercialization is so long that I simply would not invest." William Hazeltine, CEO of Human Genome Sciences Inc. of Rockville, MD and a leading advocate of ESC research; 9.) leading ESC proponent and bioethicist David Magnus at Stanford Univ; 10.) only the U.S.; 11.) U.S.; 12.) no, yes.