

LifeCell – Daily News Update

July 8, 2009

Key Industry News:

Publication	
Headline	<u>Rules on Stem Cell Research Are Eased</u>
Gist of the article	<p>Hundreds of embryonic stem cell lines, whose use in the United States had effectively been curtailed by the Bush administration can be used to study disorders and develop cures if researchers can show the cells were derived using ethical procedures, according to new rules issued by the federal government yesterday.</p> <p>President Obama had promised during last year's campaign to ease restrictions on the use of stem cells in research, and he has cited the promise of stem cell research in finding cures for disorders that have so far proved intractable.</p> <p>The use of embryonic stem cells was not prohibited under the Bush administration, but federal funding was limited to a very small number of stem cell lines, which choked off most research. The new guidelines, issued by the National Institutes of Health, permit federal funding for research using many of the approximately 700 embryonic stem cell lines that are believed to be in existence.</p> <p>In a move that drew praise from advocates of stem cell research and bitter criticism from opponents, the NIH said it will allow the use of any existing stem cell line that was created ethically. Acting NIH Director Raynard Kington said an NIH committee comprising scientists, ethicists and advocates will evaluate older lines to assess how each was derived.</p> <p>He said all embryonic stem cell lines that qualified for federal funding would have to meet a series of ethical requirements: The embryo that was destroyed to create a line must have been discarded after an in vitro fertilization procedure, and the donors must have been informed that the embryo would be destroyed for stem cell research and made fully cognizant of their choices, including donating the embryo to another couple who want a baby. No donors could have been paid for an embryo, and no threats or inducements could have been used to nudge couples toward making a donation.</p>

	<p>The new guidelines achieve Obama's vision to expand stem cell research in the United States, while also strengthening ethical standards in conducting the research, Kington said. Explaining the new guidelines, he added that during the years that George W. Bush was president, privately funded researchers in the United States and some foreign laboratories had used a variety of protocols to obtain informed consent from donors. He said it did not make sense to reject such stem cell lines because the ethics procedures used were slightly different from the specific procedures that are to be used from now on. Earlier cell lines, he said, may have derived through different procedures the same standard of ethics the government plans to enforce.</p> <p>Kington indicated that once the NIH committee established that the procedure for any one stem cell line matched the new ethics requirements, all the lines that used similar procedures could see expedited approval. He said the NIH would set up a Web site that would list all the approved stem cell lines.</p> <p>Stem cells have been widely hailed as a research tool that could one day lead to cures for many illnesses. These cells have the capacity to grow into a variety of cells and tissues. More recently, scientists have managed to obtain stem cells from adult cells, a process that does not require the destruction of an embryo. Critics of stem cell research prefer that the field be restricted to non-embryonic stem cells; advocates for the research say that this would stymie the field's medical potential.</p> <p>The use of stem cells in research has become the subject of bitter national controversy, with advocates suggesting it is immoral for the federal government not to fund research that could save thousands of lives, and with opponents arguing it is immoral to fund research that requires the destruction of embryos.</p>
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Publication	nytimes.com
Headline	New Stem Cell Rules
Gist of the article	<p>The good news about the Obama administration's new stem cell rules is that government money will pay for a lot more research than was possible under the Bush administration's cramped and ideologically driven restrictions. But some of the most promising future research could still be denied public support.</p> <p>President George W. Bush imposed restrictions that limited federally supported research to a mere 21 stem cell lines that had been derived with private money from surplus embryos at fertility clinics before mid-2001.</p> <p>Under the new guidelines, the National Institutes of Health will provide a</p>

	<p>review process by which scientists will be able to use many of the hundreds of cell lines that have since been created with private funds. And scientists will be able to use new stem cell lines provided they come from surplus fertility embryos that were donated under strict ethical rules.</p> <p>Those rules stipulate that donors must be fully informed that any embryo donated for research would be destroyed in the process and that there are other choices for disposing of surplus embryos. Donors must also give written consent at the time of donation, have the right to change their minds and must not receive payment for the donation or expect medical or financial benefits later.</p> <p>The N.I.H. will establish a panel to determine if important stem cell lines derived when the ethical requirements were less detailed can nevertheless qualify for support. To clear up any remaining confusion, the new guidelines call for establishing a registry at the N.I.H. to list all qualified stem cell lines.</p> <p>Fearing controversy, the N.I.H. decided to deny support to research using lines that might eventually be created in the laboratory by “therapeutic cloning” to match specific patients with specific diseases. Such cells could provide a valuable way to study the early stages of a disease and to derive stem cell implants that would not be rejected by a patient’s immune system.</p> <p>Agency officials note, correctly, that no one has yet derived human embryonic stem cells through therapeutic cloning. And they contend that there is no strong public sentiment for moving beyond the use of surplus embryos that would otherwise be discarded.</p> <p>The agency will need to reconsider those judgments as science and ethical thinking evolves. For now, the administration seems determined to follow Congressional and public opinion rather than lead it.</p>
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Publication	health.usnews.com
Headline	<u>Health Buzz: Stem Cell Rules and Other Health News</u>
Gist of the article	Monday the National Institutes of Health issued rules for how embryonic stem cells may be used in government-funded research, the Associated Press reports. The NIH has decided embryos used for stem cell research may only be those that fertility clinics intend to discard. Even stem cells used to generate existing lines used for research funded under the Bush administration must meet the requirement, according to the AP. The ethical requirements also stipulate that couples who donate their embryos for research must be told what might be done with them, Reuters reports. In March, President Obama removed some restrictions on stem cell research,

	<p>but he allowed the NIH to determine a code of ethics for the use of embryos in research.</p> <p>While the attention of the public and ethicists has been focused on embryonic stem cells, research into other kinds of stem cells has been advancing and, in some cases, exploding, U.S. News's Katherine Hobson reports. Consider 10 diseases that stem cells may--or may not--cure. Here are 3 ways that stem cells may speed new cures. And learn why Dr. Bernadine Healy says embryonic stem cells are obsolete.</p>
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Publication	bernama.com
Headline	<u>Cryocord Seeks To Grow Market Share To 50 Percent</u>
Gist of the article	<p>CryoCord Sdn Bhd aims to grow its market share in the cord blood banking business to 50 percent next year with its newly launched CordMSCs, an umbilical cord mesenchymal stem cell banking product.</p> <p>The medical biotechnology firm, which specialises in stem cell banking, has currently secured 35 to 40 percent share of the market, managing director James Then said Tuesday.</p> <p>"Being the only local company providing the service of CordMSCs, CryoCord has the competitive edge to tap into a potentially lucrative market," he told reporters after the CordMSCs launch here.</p> <p>Mesenchymal stem cells, the core element of CordMSCs, provide additional benefits to cord blood stem cells, which are predominantly hematopoietic (blood) stem cells.</p> <p>Then said the company has invested RM3 million in developing CordMSCs and more than 20 peoples had signed up for the product since last month.</p> <p>He said the company hoped to recoup the RM3 million investment in three years with more clients expected to sign up for the product.</p> <p>"To date, we have more than 15,000 based throughout Southeast Asia and we expect more to bank with us with CordMSCs," Then said.</p> <p>"There is tremendous market potential where 45,000 babies are born each month. One percent would have an estimated value of more than RM30 million per year in CordMSCs alone," he said.</p> <p>CryoCord already has a presence in the Philippines, Thailand, Indonesia and Brunei for the past few years, Then said.</p> <p>"CryoCord has been in the forefront of the industry, constantly innovating itself to offer products and services that are of the highest quality while</p>

	providing optimum security for their customers' precious commodity," he said.
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Publication	madison.com
Headline	New stem-cell line a step closer to use in humans
Gist of the article	<p>Human embryonic stem cells could be a step closer to wide use in human studies, thanks to a research-ready cell line developed at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.</p> <p>The university's Waisman Clinical Biomanufacturing Facility and the WiCell Research Institute, affiliated with the university, have produced a cell line that meets the Good Manufacturing Practices required for research in people, the organizations announced this week.</p> <p>Lab workers grew the most widely used cell line of campus scientist James Thomson's original five stem-cell lines, created in 1998, in the ultra-clean conditions of GMP. The original lines have contaminants that likely would make them unsuitable for human studies.</p> <p>The new cell line is available for researchers worldwide who want to study stem cells that could be approved for human studies, WiCell said. Other stem-cell lines, including the induced pluripotent stem cells made by Thomson and others from skin cells in 2007, also will be grown to GMP standards at the university.</p> <p>Geron, a California company, got federal approval in January to conduct the first human study of human embryonic stem cells and will focus on people with spinal-cord injuries.</p>

Publication	news.com.au
Headline	Call to pay women for stem cell research eggs
Gist of the article	<p>WOMEN could make money by selling their eggs for stem cell research under a proposal by one of the pioneers of Australia's stem cell regulations.</p> <p>Under present laws it is illegal for women to be paid to donate their eggs to medical research, but the University of Melbourne's Professor Loane Skene says the regulations need to be overturned to find new cures, the Herald Sun reports.</p> <p>Prof Skene, who was the Deputy Chair of the high-profile Lockhart Committee, which advised federal Parliament to open up stem cell legislation in 2006, said the invasiveness faced by women during surgery to collect eggs justified the need for donors to be compensated.</p>

"We would be living in a nanny state if we said women may be exploited for being paid for the procedure," she said.

"People undertake risky jobs every day. This is no different to a consenting adult who knows the risks of surgery making an informed decision."

Through overseas-based websites women can sell their eggs to infertile women in the US for \$1500 to \$3000, but Prof Skene said Australians would have to go to the US to be part of the deals.

In Australia, women needing donor eggs to have children cannot even help pay for the donor's medical expenses.

Last week, New York became the first state in the US to allow scientists to pay women for donating their eggs for use in stem cell research, triggering ethical debate.

Prof Skene said egg donation should be treated differently to other types of human tissue donation because, unlike eggs, organs are rarely donated to a stranger. She said women should only be allowed to donate eggs once in their lives, and only after they have had their own children.

But Caroline Chisholm Centre for Health Ethics director, Fr Kevin McGovern, said stem cell research advocates were always pushing ethical boundaries and this was a step too far.

"In this global financial crisis paying women to give their eggs could exploit vulnerable women," he said. "If there are so many folk in Australia who believe in stem cell research, why don't they donate their own eggs instead of trying to buy them off others - they should put their eggs where their mouth is."

Catholic Theological College bioethics lecturer Reverend Dr Norman Ford said egg collection could lead vulnerable women to risk their health. "We have to be careful not to reduce women down to the level of what we do with other animals such as chooks and birds."

Monash University Centre for Human Bioethics director Dr Justin Oakley said he agreed with compensating women for egg donations.

"We pay professional athletes such as AFL footballers to take all kinds of risks with their bodies."