

CBAR Workshop on Stem Cells

Law and Ethical Regulation of Stem Cell Research

23 November 2007, ESRC Genomics Forum, University of Edinburgh

Bakground

As part of the ESRC Capacity Building and Awareness Raising (CBAR) – Phase II programme of the Stem Cell Initiative, the ESRC Genomics Forum organises a series of workshops for post-doctoral researchers in stem cell research. The aim is to promote and broaden discussion among early career researchers from a variety of disciplines, including biology, embryology, clinical work, science communication, law, social anthropology, medical sociology, political science, geography, history of medicine, philosophy. The seminars represent and advance existing ESRC research in stem cells, and identify emerging policy issues in stem cell research.

The first CBAR workshop in stem cells was organised in May 2007, on the 'Sociology and Science of Stem Cells'. Social and natural scientists participants explored issues that arise at the interface of basic and clinical stem cell research, the way in which laboratory procedures and scientific standards are produced, their significance in influencing research decisions, and their implications for the nature of stem cell research.

The second workshop is dedicated to key issues in the regulation of stem cell research and the legal protection of human embryonic stem cell (hESC) research. Legal changes have occurred in recent years with the adoption of tightly regulated but permissive approaches in the use of hESC for research purposes. Current legal regimes vary widely, from permissive to restrictive, in different countries with diverse cultural backgrounds. This event provides an opportunity for participants to reflect on the role of law in regulating hESC research, the links between law, ethics and culture, and their implications for research priorities and practice. The workshop aims to promote understanding of the 'basic ingredients' of stem cell law, and the interaction of legal, scientific, ethical and social expertise in regulatory policy and practice of stem cell science.

Session One on 'Regulatory aspects of stem cell research' will draw on scientists' work and current experience in hESC research and therapeutic applications to reflect on problems with regulatory oversight of hESC research. The UK experience will be considered together with wider comparative discussion of different regimes for the regulation of human stem cell and tissue engineering research internationally.

Session Two on 'Institutional values and ethics in stem cell research' will explore how stem cell regulation is shaped by scientific, institutional, public expectations about the promise and risks of science, including science priorities, normative assumptions, policy structures, patient hopes, public concerns. The session will consider the connection between law and morality, by drawing on the law and ethics of creating hESC lines and problems with patent protection of hESC research.

Programme

From 10:30	Welcome & Coffee
10:45-11:00	General Introduction
11:00-12:30	Session One: Regulatory aspects of stem cell research 11:00-11:30 Stem cell science: research promise, regulatory restriction (<i>Marilyn Robertson, Director, Scottish Stem Cell Network</i>) 11:30-12:00 Difficulties in regulating the ethics of stem cells and human tissue (<i>Ingrid Geesink, Postdoctoral Fellow, Cesagen</i>) 12:00-12:30 Q & A
12:30-13:30	Lunch break
13:30-15:00	Session Two: Institutional values and ethics in stem cell research 13:30-14:00 Hopes and expectations in stem cell research and regulation (<i>Nik Brown, Senior Lecturer in Sociology, SATSU / Visiting Research Fellow, ESRC Genomics Forum</i>) 14:00-14:30 Law, morality and culture in stem cell research (<i>Gerard Porter, Lecturer in Medical Law & Ethics, Edinburgh</i>) 14:30- 15:00 Q & A
15:00-15:15	Coffee Break
15:15-16:00	Plenary Discussion

To attend please register by emailing:
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