

Free the unethical crime of haruko obokata literature review sample

[Sociology](#), [Community](#)



INTRODUCTION

Stem Cell research is a controversial topic that has and continues to spawn heated debate. While the potential of stem cells research is endless it comes with a number of ethical considerations. Stem cells are like blank cells that can transform into whatever cells they are surrounded by; if placed in the liver they can become liver cells, the same in the heart or the a kidney. However, the research remains controversial because the richest source of stem cells needed to further the research are most often found in the tissue of aborted fetuses. This brings up many ethical questions that have left advances in the research to stagnate on many fronts. However, a young scientist, named Haruko Obokata, earlier this year, claimed to have found the means to develop stem cells that is far more cost effective than previous investments and does not have a need for fetal tissue. Her work research and results were released earlier this year. She presented the STAP cells, or stimulus-triggered activation of pluripotency cells (Sample, 2014). Her work inspired many others to test her results and further the research. Unfortunately, these researchers had a difficult recreated the results under the condition explainer in her papers and research. This created the some scientific skepticism and investigation into the validity of her work.

DISCUSSION

In April of this year a council of scientist reviewed her work, images, and results and found that she was guilty of scientific misconduct and lacking ethical research practices. Many of the images that Obokata used to share her results had been augmented to improve their quality. She may have

padding the research with irrelevant data and presenting her work as scientific truth, when it clearly had many discrepancies in the research and listed results that cannot seem to be recreated by others (Sample, 2014). Many of those involved in her research are working to distance themselves from her misconduct and lack of ethics. However, the most extreme result of her falsified research is that her mentor, Yoshiki Sasai, who, while not involved in the research, he helped her to be published, committed suicide shortly after her guilty verdict of misconduct was determined. Now there is no direct reason to assume that Sasai's suicide was solely and directly linked to Obokata's scandal, but it obviously did not help (Spitzer, 2014). Even if she only padded her research with a little exaggeration and visual augmentation it is still a violation of the ethical standards that all the scientists, in all fields, can be held accountable to. There is really no excuse for that. Science is founded on provable facts, to introduce anything that is in any way fraudulent and you undermine all of the research within that same field. While her changes were not necessarily made with the intention of dishonesty it may contain data that amounts to her personal wishful thinking. She was required to print retractions of her work and was found guilty of misconduct by the science council. She continues to stand-by her work. She has lost the respect of her peers and trust of the scientific community (Cyranoski, 2014). That said the reaction and consequences of her apparent dishonesty seems just in this case.

CONCLUSION

In the end, science is what has and continues to allow us to understand how and why the world around us behaves as it does. It helps explain people, places and things. It has allowed us to understand disease and illness in order to affect life-saving measures. Science is so very important to modern society. That said if someone within the scientific community, trusted by society to find such answers, makes-up those answers, betrays that trust. While Haruko Obokata did not commit a violent act or any criminal offenses, her unethical choices and behaviors diminish the work of so many other scientists whose work is authentic. For that reason her consequences, once again, seem just.

REFERENCES

- Cyranoski, D. (2014, April 1). Stem-cell scientist found guilty of misconduct. Nature Magazine, 1. Retrieved from <http://www.nature.com/news/stem-cell-scientist-found-guilty-of-misconduct-1.14974>
- Sample, I. (2014, April 1). Stem cell scientist haruko obokata found guilty of misconduct. The Guardian. Retrieved from <http://www.theguardian.com/science/2014/apr/01/stem-cell-scientist-haruko-obokata-guilty-misconduct-committee>
- Spitzer, K. (2014, August 8). Science scandal triggers suicide, soul-searching in japan. Time Magazine, 1. DOI: Sample, I. (2014, April 1). Stem cell scientist haruko obokata found guilty of misconduct. The Guardian. Retrieved from <http://time.com/3091584/japan-yoshiki-sasai-stem-cells-suicide-haruko-obokata/>