Stem cell research be morally justified

Experience, Human Nature

Stem cell research studies how these unspecialised cells are able to reproduce themselves and their ability to transform into more specialised cells.

They are seen as potential cures for a wide range of diseases such as Parkinson’s and diabetes, as well as treatments to grow breast tissue for many cancer survivors [1]. There are two main types of stem cells: embryonic stem cells and adult stem cells, and they can be found in animals and humans [2]. In recent years, stem cell research has caused controversies regarding the use of human embryos or foetus which are obtained during or after an abortion or subsequent to a miscarriage [3]. The debate is very much centred on the ethics and the morality of the research, with politicians, medical experts and religious leaders sharing opinions on the issue. For people who believe that human life begins at conception, the use of embryos as part of the research is seen as a ‘ destruction’ or even murder. The more religious individuals may also consider the work as an intrusion of God’s creation.

Psalm 139: 13 of the Christian Bible suggests that humans are made by God, and was created while still in the womb (“ For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb”), implying that embryos, made up of about 100 cells (blastocysts), are living. Scientists however, states that the blastocysts have “ no human features” [4] and therefore its use in research cannot be recognized as ‘ killing a human’. Moreover, a recent breakthrough in obtaining human embryonic cells showed that it is possible to collect human embryonic stem cells without destroying the embryos [5]. This new technique allows the embryo to develop normally, making the

technique more ethically just. In addition, some individuals who are against stem cell research fear it could eventually lead to reproductive cloning, another argument that many would find ethically unacceptable [6]. There have also been reports that some mice that had been treated for Parkinson's disease with embryonic stem cells died from having brain tumours [4].

Also, the stem cells that had been stored over a long period of time had been shown to produce anomalies in the chromosomes, similar to the one that creates cancer cells. Politicians also have views on this matter. President George Bush of the United States assured in May 2005 that he is ' a strong supporter of stem cell research' but against the proposal of using taxpayer's money to ' promote science that destroys life in order to save life' [7]. Furthermore, scientists in Canada were no longer authorized to create or clone embryos for research, from 2002, but instead use existing embryos that had been discarded by couples [8].

Those who are for stem cell research argue that this study would help us treatments to many diseases. In the early 2008, a team of scientists from California, reported that they may have found the first ' hint therapies' to cure type 1 diabetes, that have been drawn from human embryonic cells [9]. The scientists told that they injected the cells into the abdomens or backs of the mice with destroyed islets. The cells reportedly differentiated into insulin-producing islet cells. To this date, the only existing treatments available for people with Type 1 diabetes are a dose of regular insulin or islet-cell transplants.

As well as finding cures to countless diseases, this research could also lead to growing organs transplants. Another argument from people who are for this research it is a necessity that one life has to be given up to save another. . To conclude, stem cell research has many potential benefits but it also hold many risks. I believe that stem cell research is justifiable because it would bring hope to many disease and illness sufferers. I also believe that using embryonic stem cells from discharged embryos are reasonably acceptable because the embryos would not go to waste.

In addition, I feel that further techniques of obtaining the cells without having to destroy embryos will be discovered in the near future. Referenceshttps://www. newscientist. com/article/dn13170-stem-cell-breakthrough-leaves-embryos-unharmed/http://usliberals. about. com/od/stemcellresearch/i/StemCell1_2. htmhttp://biotech. about. com/od/bioethics/i/issuestemcells_2. htm