

# Therapeutic cloning: it needs to be legal

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Imagine being able to cure Parkinson's Disease.

How about MS or ALS? What about even being able to cure diabetes.

Together, these diseases are found in 26.6-27.2 million people in the United States and there could be a possible cure in the future. It's called therapeutic cloning. This type of cloning involves using embryonic stem cells to cure or treat diseases that don't currently have any known cure, such as Parkinson's Disease.

It uses a process called "somatic cell nuclear transplant" where genetic material from one cell is placed into the nucleus of an egg to create an embryo with stem cells that are an exact genetic match as the patient. It is then possible to use those stem cells to create organs that are genetically the same as the patient and will not be rejected by their body. Once obtained, these stem cells can be grown into any type of cell in the body and as a result it may be possible to treat or even cure diseases, like Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis, diabetes, ALS and many others. In the United States 1-2% of people over 60 develop Parkinson's, approximately 250,000-350,000 people have Multiple sclerosis, 25.8 million people have diabetes (8.

3% of the U. S.) and an estimated 30,000 people may have ALS. Therapeutic cloning may be these people's best chance for a cure, but this research is widely opposed throughout the United States. Many people believe it should be illegal to continue research.

Why? Because it involves the destruction of embryos to obtain their stem cells. Therapeutic cloning should be legal in the United States, because of all the possible medical and scientific advancements, including the treatment

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and cures to many diseases. Arguments against therapeutic cloning include; the destruction of embryos, could lead to reproductive cloning, and that it is no different than the Nazis experiments on the Jews. However, in the case of life versus death, therapeutic cloning could be extremely beneficial to those who have these diseases. Having the opportunity to save lives on a regular basis show that therapeutic cloning does more good then harm. “

Therapeutic cloning requires the deliberate creation and disaggregation of a human embryo.

” This quote by scientist David A. Prentice states the biggest argument against therapeutic cloning, that it intentionally creates human embryos destined to be destroyed. Many people view this as nothing more than the killing of innocent babies. Some believe it is immoral to use embryonic stem cells for research purposes. They think that there are other cures out there for scientists to discover and it isn't necessary to destroy embryos.

Many people who think therapeutic cloning is immoral because it destroys embryos, think that processes like in vitro fertilization are just fine. When you look closely at both processes you see they're really not all that different. Both are used to create embryos and both processes “ discard” embryos. However with in vitro fertilization, out of the many embryos fertilized only a few are used, the extra embryos that are not used are simply discarded. On the other hand with therapeutic cloning the embryos aren't thrown out, but used to help people with horrible diseases. Surely that cannot be defined as “ discarding”.

Scientist Michael J. Sardel states that very thing when saying, " To look at the argument from the opposite end, if the creation and sacrifice of embryos in IVF is morally acceptable, why isn't the creation and sacrifice of embryos for stem cell research also acceptable? After all both practices serve worthy ends, and cure diseases such as Parkinson's, is at least as important as enabling infertile couples to have genetically related children." That's the big question right there. Why is one acceptable and the other, as some would put it, an outrageous crime? Both practices involve the destruction of embryos, but in IVF the extra embryos aren't used like they are in therapeutic cloning. So, that leaves the question..

. what's so wrong with therapeutic cloning? The answer some people will give is that it will only lead to reproductive cloning. Reproductive cloning is defined as making a full living copy of an organism using a surrogate mother. In other words instead of using the embryo's stems cells after the first couple of days to create specialized cells, the embryo is implanted into a surrogate mother and allowed to grow to maturity. This would produce a human being identical in genes to the original cell donor.

This has people scared, because they don't know how to react to things that were otherwise considered science fiction, coming to life. They're worried about things like such as any cell obtained off a person could be used to create a clone with or without the person knowing about it. If you're cloned without your knowledge how is your identity your own? With the chance of death for not just for the clone but the surrogate mother also, so high and the chance of birth defects and problems later in life it just isn't safe, moral or worth the risk. It isn't hard to see why people are scared. Right now <https://assignbuster.com/therapeutic-cloning-it-needs-to-be-legal/>

cloning is still a thing of the future. So far a cloned human being has never been confirmed though some scientists have claimed they've cloned a human, but sheep, mice and cats all have been.

"...there is no difference in the nuclear transfer technique or the cloned embryo, allowing 'therapeutic cloning' experimentation to proceed will inevitably lead to reproductive cloning." says Dr.

Prentice in a paper on the ethical issues of cloning. As he points out therapeutic and reproductive cloning both use the same process, reproductive cloning just goes a step further. According to Prentice letting research for therapeutic cloning continue, also means having to let reproductive cloning research continue because there's no way to stop it. Human embryos have only been successfully cloned a handful of times and therapeutic cloning is still in the early stages of development. If therapeutic cloning is allowed to continue it will still be years until it is put into practice. The reality of human reproductive cloning being an issue is small.

Most scientists are against trying to clone humans, not just because the success rate in animals has been so low, but as this following quote says, "The aim of research into human cloning has never been to clone people, or to make babies for spare parts. The research aims to obtain stem cells to cure diseases." It says it right there, curing diseases is the number one priority. Making a bunch of cloned people is not the point of this research, as many people suggest. Dolly the sheep, the first cloned animal, was the only one out of 277 cloned embryos to make it to a live birth, most resulted in miscarriage. A few years later Dolly died of a lung disease.

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The odds of a human clone living and being healthy is so very small most scientists wouldn't risk it. No one knows what the probability of a successful outcome would be. It could be 1 in 300, as Dolly was or it could be a lot higher. The risk is still too big for most scientists to take. Still there may be some willing to risk it, but there's always a risk with any medical procedure and there's no way to prevent that. It's not all that different from the debate over space travel in the 60's.

Back then many people were opposed to sending men into space. They saw it as a suicide mission. In the end scientists decided that the benefits outweighed the risks and the men going into space knew the risks and accepted them. In the end the mission was a success. Without putting aside the risks and going for something there can be no gain. The same is true for therapeutic cloning, you have to put aside the risk that someone will clone a human if we're ever going to see any benefits.

Still there's always the argument that by destroying embryos we are no better than the Nazis were to the Jews. Though this may not always come to mind, there are people out there who believe that using embryonic stem cells violates the Nurenborg Code that was established after World War II. As William Saunders puts it, " If human embryos are human beings, then " therapeutic cloning" which creates an embryo only to destroy it in the process of exploiting its stem cells, violates a cardinal principal of the Nurenborg Code: " There will be no experimentation on a human subject when it is known death or disabling injury will result. Regardless of the good that might be produced by such experiments, the very experiments are of their very nature an immoral use of human beings." In stating this Saunders <https://assignbuster.com/therapeutic-cloning-it-needs-to-be-legal/>

is saying that therapeutic cloning is the same as what the Nazis did to the Jews with their “ experiments”.

Torture, which would eventually result in death. It doesn't matter that millions of people could be helped by therapeutic cloning because simply experimenting with it is in violation of the Nuremburg Code. If you're a person who believes an embryo is a human being no matter what stage of development it's in, even if it's less than six days old, than therapeutic cloning is indeed in violation of the Nuremburg Code. Of course not everyone believes that to be true. If you don't then therapeutic cloning is not in violation of the Nuremburg Code. Being able to prove that therapeutic cloning violates the Nuremburg Code is a challenge in itself, because you would need to prove when an embryo becomes a human being.

Since there is currently no clear line as to when that is, you would never be able to officially ban therapeutic cloning on the basis of the Nuremburg Code. In Michael J. Sandel's paper on therapeutic cloning he uses the metaphor, “ To respect the old growth forest does not mean that no tree may ever be felled or harvested for human purposes. Respecting the forest may be consistent with using it, but the purposes must be weighty and appropriate with the wondrous nature of the thing.” There is no doubt that embryos deserve respect, but that doesn't mean that they can't be used to help people when needed. Therapeutic cloning isn't something being developed to use in unnecessary circumstances to destroy embryos.

Isn't being able to cure diabetes, MS, Parkinson's and ALS and many others indeed a wondrous thing? To look at it another way, if therapeutic cloning is

in violation of the Nurenburg Code, then so are practices like abortion. Yet abortion is legal and though still opposed by some, people have accepted it as a person's own choice. The same would be true if therapeutic cloning became a regular practice. No one would be forced to use it. It would be their choice since the person with the disease would need to use the DNA from one of their own cells to be able to produce the cure. Trying to say that there is ever going to be a unanimous answer where therapeutic cloning is concerned would be a lie.

There will always be some form of opposition. When you look at the potential benefits that therapeutic cloning offers there is no doubt that this research should continue. By looking at the facts against the opposition you should see that the destruction of embryos isn't really any different than in vitro fertilization. Instead of throwing out the extra cells like in IVF, it uses them to find cures for Parkinson's, diabetes, MS, and ALS. You'll also see that reproductive cloning is too dangerous for most people to risk.

It poses too many threats to both the mother and the cloned child. This includes death, birth defects and problems later in life. Lastly, it is impossible to prove if therapeutic cloning is in violation of the Nurenburg Code because there are too many variables. To some it is a violation because of their values and beliefs and to others it is not. The great thing about possibly being able to use therapeutic cloning is that no one would be forced into doing it.

It would be their own choice. Once you look at these facts it becomes clear that the future of possibly curing 26. 6-27. 2 million people suffering from



many terrible diseases lies in therapeutic cloning. Would you want those deaths on your hands?