

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN EMBRYONIC STEM CELL (HESC) RESEARCH IN MALAYSIA

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Human embryonic researches are regarded as very important in developing solutions for the treatment and prevention of infertility and other diseases or disorders in human. Apart from their potential to treat or cure diseases, human embryonic stem cells in particular, also provide a model to study very early human development and some of the disorders that lead to birth defects and childhood cancers. The stem cells from them can provide a unique resource to understand genetic diseases and to develop cures. Human embryonic stem cells could also be used to understand the origin or causes of various diseases such as Alzheimer's disease or Parkinson's disease, which are currently unknown. Stem cells derived through *nuclear transfer* from patients with such afflictions would provide special tools to study these diseases and possibly develop drugs for treatments. Given the potential benefits that it promises to human beings, many scientists urge for embryonic stem cells research. Nevertheless, the field of embryo stem cell research has been followed by wide range of ethical, religious and legal controversies from the very beginning and these issues have been crucial in many decision-makings. Given the complex nature of human embryonic stem cell research, it is crucial that research of this kind need to be properly regulated. This article examines, analyses and criticizes the regulation and policy currently available in Malaysia, and further makes proposals for a more effective regulatory framework for HESCR in Malaysia.