

Coalition for the Advancement of Medical Research

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October 8, 2004

H.E. Mr. Jean Ping
President, U.N. General Assembly
U.N. Headquarters
Conference Building
New York, NY 10017

To the members of the United Nations General Assembly,

We write on behalf of patients, advocates, caregivers, academic institutions, scientists and researchers to request that the Sixth Committee (Legal) not recommend a treaty banning therapeutic cloning (technically termed “nuclear transfer”).

It is critical that the United Nations distinguish between therapeutic cloning research, which works with cells in a Petri dish and merits our strong support, and reproductive cloning which aims to produce a child. Reproductive cloning is unethical and dangerous. Therapeutic cloning research is safe, ethical and may lead to treatments or cures for medical conditions including Alzheimer’s, juvenile diabetes, Parkinson’s, multiple sclerosis, ALS, heart disease, spinal cord injury, paralysis, cancer and HIV/AIDS.

The therapeutic research that involves the cloning of microscopically small human cells and genes does not lead to human birth: rather, it is integral to the production of more effective diagnostic procedures and breakthrough medicines to treat many diseases. Nuclear transfer technologies may make it possible, for example, to generate replacement neurons to heal illnesses of the brain; pancreatic cells to heal juvenile diabetes; skin, cartilage and bone tissue for burn, accident victims and the casualties of war; and cells for the treatment of liver and heart disease. This research may also enable us to regenerate optical and spinal cord tissue, offering hope to the blind and paralyzed.

We must not turn our backs on, potentially, one of the greatest medical advances of our time. Let us not destroy the hope for treatments for the millions of adults and children who live with intense suffering and face premature death.

Global bans, such as this one, offer illusory protection for harm that doesn’t exist. Legitimate concerns can be addressed through responsible regulation. We urge the Sixth Committee not to recommend a ban or to condemn, research that represents one of humanity’s best hopes to understand and treat devastating illnesses and injuries.

Respectfully,

Daniel Perry,
President