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## SCIENCE FILE

### Stem cell research guidelines are offered

From Reuters

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New international guidelines on human embryonic stem cell research call for close scrutiny of scientists and clear consent from people donating cells, but do not settle the issue of paying women who donate eggs.

The International Society for Stem Cell Research, the principal scientific group for stem cell scientists, said its 15 pages of guidelines released Thursday were meant to establish ground rules for a field stung by a fraud scandal and opposition on moral grounds.

Crafted by researchers, ethicists and legal experts from 14 countries, the nonbinding rules are intended to promote uniform research practices worldwide.

Advocates say embryonic stem cell research is the best hope for cures for conditions such as Alzheimer's, diabetes and Parkinson's. Because such research requires destruction of days-old human embryos, opponents call it immoral.

Critics condemned the guidelines, published in the journal *Science* and at <http://www.isscr.org>.

"This is worthless as an ethical guide because it is issued by scientists and entrepreneurs who have dedicated their careers to destructive human cloning and human embryo research and who will profit from the expansion of these abuses," said Richard Doerflinger of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. "It is a recipe guide for how to prepare the chicken, written by the foxes."

The guidelines call for special scrutiny by research institutions, but do not specify a precise form of oversight. They also require explicit consent from anyone donating cells for such research.

The society did not reach consensus on whether paying even a modest amount of money to women who donate their eggs for research should be allowed.

The guidelines prohibit "reproductive cloning" aimed at producing human clones.

The rules permit the possibility of experiments creating chimeras — animals seeded with human cells — if approved by an institution's stem cell research oversight mechanism.