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## Half-Million Dollar Prize Offered for Therapeutic Cloning

By Steven Edwards  August 07, 2007 | 2:33:48 PM Categories: [Stem Cell Research](#)

Morris Iemma, Premier of New South Wales, [announced](#) a \$500,000 reward to the first scientist who succeeds in deriving cloned embryonic stem cells, reports *The Daily Telegraph*. Such an accomplishment would provide researchers worldwide with disease-specific stem cells to study and patient-specific stem cells for treatment.

A five-year ban on somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) -- the best known method of therapeutic cloning, due in large part to [mistaken](#) results by Hwang Woo-Suk -- was [overturned](#) earlier this year by the state parliament, so Iemma made sure to reference it.

"Put simply, this funding will enable NSW scientists to undertake work we hope will result in the creation of the country's first stem-cell lines derived from somatic-cell nuclear transfer embryos. In fact, if successful it could well be a world first," he said.



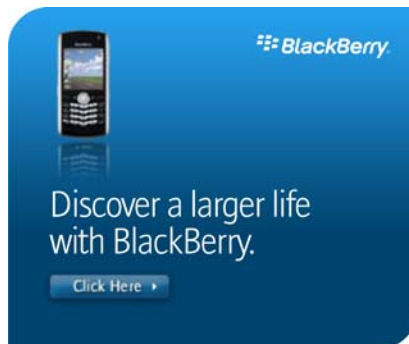
A less well known, though nearly universally agreeable, therapeutic cloning method is dedifferentiation. It offers the same benefits of therapeutic cloning -- disease- and patient-specific stem cells -- without creating or destroying what some consider to be a human life. Instead, it reverts a somatic (i.e., non-embryonic) cell back into an embryonic stem-cell like state.

Dedifferentiation has been [accomplished](#) in mice, and researchers are now working on achieving similar results using human cells. Perhaps an Australian researcher will make this step and claim \$500,000 for their own enjoyment?

Time will tell.

[\\$500K for stem cell breakthrough](#) [The Daily Telegraph]

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