

## Human-animal embryo tests 'vital'

**Medical research using hybrid embryos that are a mixture of human and animal is "vital" in the fight against disease, scientists have said.**

The Academy of Medical Sciences said it backed the draft Human Tissue and Embryos Bill allowing embryos that were 99.9% human and 0.1% animal.

Under plans, it would be illegal for embryos to grow for more than 14 days.

The report says that, in the future, the "true" hybrids - containing more animal DNA - may be vital for research.

**There are no substantive ethical or moral reasons not to proceed with research on human embryos containing animal material**

Martin Bobrow  
Academy of Medical Sciences

The government's draft Bill, published last month, represented a U-turn on previous proposals to ban the use of hybrid embryos.

It is now being scrutinised by MPs and peers.

The academy's Martin Bobrow said research on hybrid embryos should be subject to the same rules as research on human embryos.

They include the 14-day rule and a ban on re-implanting embryos into a woman or animal.

"There are no substantive ethical or moral reasons not to proceed with research on human embryos containing animal material under the same framework of regulatory control," he said.

There were currently no scientific reasons to create true hybrid embryos, Mr Bobrow added.

"However, given the speed of this field of research, the working group could not rule out the emergence of scientifically valid reasons in the future."

### **Animal welfare**

The report also calls for a rethink of how the area is regulated.

The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority currently regulates human embryos.

But the Home Office regulates the creation of animals that have been genetically modified with human genes.

The Home Office's paramount concern is animal welfare - rather than ethics or human safety.

The academy has called for a more joined up approach to ensure that any potential problems can be foreseen and averted.

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