

INTERNATIONAL Herald Tribune

A look at stem cell legislation around the world

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A look at how some countries around the world handle stem cell research:

_ AUSTRALIA: A new law passed Wednesday allows therapeutic cloning, the splicing of DNA from skin cells into eggs to produce stem cells, also known as master cells, which are capable of forming all the tissues of the human body. The cloned embryos cannot be implanted in a womb and must be destroyed within 14 days. In 2002, parliament voted to allow scientists to extract stem cells from spare embryos intended for in vitro fertilization but banned cell cloning.

_ BRAZIL: In March 2005, the Congress voted to permit research using embryos left over from in-vitro fertilization that had been frozen for at least three years. It upheld a ban on cloning embryos.

_ EUROPEAN UNION: Last summer the EU decided it would not fund stem cell research that destroys embryos. However, the EU will continue to fund other kinds of stem cell projects, which must be approved by independent scientific experts, and are subject to stringent ethical reviews, according to guidelines in place until 2013.

_ SINGAPORE: Singapore has recently been promoting itself as the international hub of stem cell research, luring scientists from around the world, including one of the British scientists who cloned Dolly the sheep. It provides robust support for stem cell research, including the cloning of human embryos.

_ SPAIN: In May, Parliament voted to expand the number of embryos available for stem cell research to include any frozen within 14 days of conception. Previously, researchers were only able to use embryos frozen before July 2003. The law also allows parents of children with incurable diseases to conceive new embryos and choose a healthy one to serve as a tissue donor, in cases where all other medical treatments have failed.

_ SWITZERLAND: Voters approved stem cell research in a national referendum in November 2004, allowing only the use of embryonic stem cells left over from in-vitro fertilization. The law strictly prohibits human cloning or the creation of embryos for stem-cell research.

UNITED STATES:

The Bush administration has banned federal funding for research on stem cell lines developed after August 2001, but cloning embryos for research is being attempted in the U.S. with private money.

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