



**DO NO
HARM**

The Coalition of Americans
for Research Ethics

“As to diseases ,make a habit of two things —
to help, or at least *do no harm.*”

— Hippocrates, *The Epidemics* —

THE “POLITICAL SCIENCE” OF STEM CELLS LESSON 12: DON’T THROW AWAY THE FUTURE

The political campaign for embryonic stem cell research risks doing great harm, by ignoring or even blocking stem cell treatments that could help many thousands of suffering patients here and now. Politics should not trump scientific fact and patients’ lives.

POLITICAL:

“There are also cord blood stem cells. But the real opportunity for medical advance lies in the flexible embryonic stem cells...” – Sen. Arlen Specter, *Cong. Record*, Oct. 21, 2005, p. S11729

SCIENCE:

Umbilical cord blood stem cells can now help suffering patients with six dozen illnesses, and show promise in treating many more. Due to a lack of national coordination and funds for cord blood banking, 4 million samples of cord blood are discarded in hospital nurseries every year – a tragedy that Washington-area Channel 4 News calls “throwing away the future.”

“Writing in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, researchers at Duke University Medical Center reported that infants born with a fatal nerve disorder have been helped -- and perhaps even saved -- by treatment with stem cells taken from the umbilical cords of healthy babies...

The target in this case was Krabbe’s disease, a devastating enzyme disorder that prevents the nerve fibers in babies’ brains from developing the myelin insulation they need, leading to blindness, deafness, cognitive deterioration and death before age 2.... ‘Our oldest survivor is 6 1/2,’ says [lead author Dr. Maria] Escolar. ‘She’s now running, jumping and doing well in school.’” – “Stem Cells Save Babies,” *TIME*, May 30, 2005, p. 59.

“Early research in animals suggests that cord blood may provide a new bounty of cures and treatments for many other medical conditions, including heart attack, Parkinson’s disease, stroke, Alzheimer’s disease, muscular dystrophy, diabetes, spinal cord injury and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. ‘This is all new biology, which could have an unlimited potential,’ said Dr. Paul Sanberg, director of the University of Southern Florida’s center for aging and brain repair.” – “Medical hope in umbilical cord blood; researchers find its healing powers may provide cures for many deadly maladies,” *Chicago Tribune*, October 23, 2005, www.chicagotribune.com/technology/chi-0510230516oct23,1,2647650.story?coll=chi-techtopheds-hed

“Most hospitals discard cord blood after a baby’s birth, despite the fact that the blood contains stem cells that can be used in transplants for as many as 80 serious medical problems. Those include the most prevalent types of leukemia, metabolic disorders like Tay-Sachs disease, blood-related conditions such as sickle cell anemia and severe anemia problems. ‘People literally are dying on the transplant list who could be cured with this,’ said Dr. Brian Mason [ob/gyn at Detroit’s St. John Hospital].” – “Babies Provide Lifelines; Umbilical Cord Stem Cells Aid in Transplants for Leukemia Patients, Others,” *Charlotte Observer* (North Carolina), November 7, 2005, <http://stemcellnews.com/articles/stem-cells-cord-blood-coalition.htm>

For more information to help distinguish politics from science on stem cell research, see our web site at www.stemcellresearch.org.

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