



Nebraska Coalition
for Lifesaving Cures

The Newsletter of the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures
July, 2011

Federal funding for stem-cell research appears safe

Federal funding for embryonic stem cell research nationwide, including at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, appears secure for now after a federal judge Wednesday dismissed a challenge to that funding.

"This is great news for the researchers who are working hard every day to find treatments and cures for the many debilitating diseases that affect millions of Americans," said Victoria Kohout, executive director of the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures.

[Full Story in the Omaha World-Herald \(07-27-2011\)](#)

Firm launches two stem cell trials against blindness

Geron made medical history last October, when it treated subject number one in the first-ever trial of a human embryonic stem cell (hESC) therapy, for spinal cord injury. Now, the second and third hESC trials have been launched.

On July 12, in an operating room at the University of California, Los Angeles, the first subject in each of the trials -- one for a rare form of blindness that usually begins in childhood, the other for a common cause of blindness in the elderly -- was treated with retinal pigment epithelial (RPE) cells derived from hESCs.

[Full Story on Nature.com \(04-14-2011\)](#)

Biology's New Supermodel

Move over mice. Human induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells are making strides to become the next best thing in translational research—disease-specific human cells grown in a dish. Using a variety of approaches, researchers have generated stem cells from mature adult cells of disease-afflicted patients and subsequently differentiated them into the various tissue types involved in the disease.

[Full Story in *The Scientist* \(07-20-2011\)](#)



Many Americans approve of stem cell research for curing serious diseases

While research using human embryonic stem cells has roused political controversy for almost two decades, little has been done to scientifically assess American attitudes on the subject. New research from the University of Nevada, Reno provides decision-makers with a much clearer picture of how their constituents truly feel about the subject.

The study, "U.S. attitudes toward human embryonic stem cell research," published this month in the journal, *Nature Biotechnology*, was conducted by University of Nevada, Reno faculty members Mariah Evans (lead author) and Jonathan Kelley, who surveyed a large, representative national sample of 2,295 respondents in 2009.

[Full Story from *Nevada Today* \(06-28-2011\)](#)

Stem cell bill gets Republican champion

Pennsylvania Republican Rep. Charlie Dent is taking the place of defeated Rep. Mike Castle (R-Del.) as the lead co-sponsor of embryonic stem cell legislation, offering key Republican support for a controversial bill reviled by many social conservatives.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Diana DeGette (D-Colo.), would give legislative backing to President Obama's 2009 executive order allowing federal funding for medical research using discarded embryos from fertility clinics.

[Full Story from *The Hill* \(06-29-2011\)](#)

Curtailing embryonic stem cell research would also hurt iPS cell research, Stanford expert finds

Any legislation that slows human embryonic stem cell research is likely to also seriously harm the study of induced pluripotent stem cells, according to a new study by researchers at the Stanford University School of Medicine, the Mayo Clinic and the University of Michigan. The finding strongly refutes the idea that embryonic stem cell research can be abandoned in favor of the less-controversial iPS cells, which are

derived from adult human tissue.

[Full Story from *Stanford University* \(06-09-2011\)](#)

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