



Nebraska Coalition  
for Lifesaving Cures

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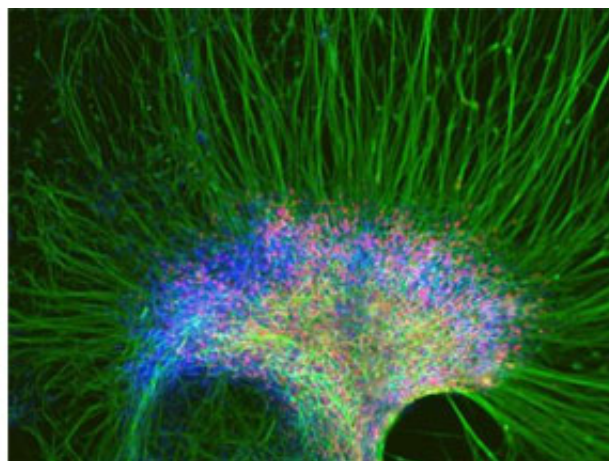
The Newsletter of the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures  
November, 2011

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## UW scientists grow neurons that integrate into brain

Scientists at the University of Wisconsin-Madison have grown human embryonic stem cells into neurons that appear capable of adapting themselves to the brain's machinery by sending and receiving messages from other cells, raising hopes that medicine may one day use this tool to treat patients with such disorders as Parkinson's and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

[Full Story in the Milwaukee Journal-Star \(11-21-2011\)](#)



Neural cells made from human embryonic stem cells and implanted in the brains of mice have been shown to send and receive messages.



## Stem Cell Innovator James Thomson Says Geron Blazed Trail For Others To Follow

Thirteen years ago, in a small closet-like laboratory, a University of Wisconsin scientist named James Thomson used funding from a Menlo Park, Calif.-based biotechnology company called Geron to create the first human embryonic stem cells, cells derived from human embryos that should have the potential to develop into any type of human tissue.

[Full Story in Forbes \(11-15-2011\)](#)

## The day after Geron's news: a realistic outlook for the stem cell field

On November 14, Geron announced it would be immediately stopping its stem cell research program. What does this mean?

While this program has (or should I say "had") a number of elements, at its heart was of course its hESC-based OPC drug (GRNOPC1) for spinal cord injury, which was in an FDA-approved Phase I Clinical Trial that had already enrolled 4 patients. While the company will continue to follow these patients and keep a limited core staff of stem cell employees for a short period of time, no more patients will be treated with GRNOPC1, at least not via Geron.

[Full Story on Knoepfler Lab Stem Cell Blog \(11-15-2011\)](#)

*Add Some Sparkle to Your Life, or Send a Thoughtful Gift to a Loved One*

Purchase one of these custom-designed creations, and up to 87 percent of your purchase is tax deductible. Best of all, it helps spread the word about the importance of stem cell research.

The pendant on each necklace, bracelet and bookmark proclaims "Protect Hope" on one side and "Advance Cures" on the other. It's wearable art with a message!

For every piece bought by members of the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures, we will receive \$5 from the Missouri Cures Education Foundation, another nonprofit working to advance stem cell research. If you order online, enter "NCLC" in the discount code box to ensure we receive our donation. You should also mention the code if you order by phone at 314-993-1900.



**Beaded Bracelet**  
\$40

**Necklace**  
\$35

**Rope Bracelet**  
\$30

<http://www.missouricures.com/jewelry>

## 6 Reasons Mississippians Said No to Personhood

Only a few months ago strategists were urging their candidates in Mississippi to stay clear of the "Personhood" initiative they'd be sharing space with on the ballot. More than a few candidates, believing it was the only safe path, chose to take a public position in support of the measure defining human life as existing at the moment of conception (or cloning, or a twinkle in an eye). Disease, rape, incest not counting as exceptions. Nothing would. Felonies for everyone.

Mississippi has a massively conservative voting base and heavily entrenched conservative politicians and institutions. Polling showed white and black voters overwhelmingly favored the initiative.

[Full Story from Huffington Post \(11-8-2011\)](#)

## New Method for Making Neurons Could Lead to Parkinson's Treatment

A new method of synthesizing dopamine-producing neurons, the predominant type of brain cell destroyed in Parkinson's, offers hope for creating cell-replacement therapies that reverse the damage.

The method provides an efficient way of making functional cells. When transplanted into mice and rats with brain damage and movement problems similar to Parkinson's, the cells integrated into the brain and worked normally, reversing the animals' motor issues.

[Full Story in Technology Review \(11-7-2011\)](#)

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