



New Jersey Catholic Stem Cell Research Education Campaign

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Physician-researcher sees hope — and hype — in some so-called stem cell “discoveries”

Short documentary featuring national experts now available throughout New Jersey

It happens at least once each week, and always ends in disappointment. A suffering patient contacts Dr. David Hess requesting a stem cell injection to help them recover their ability to walk or speak. But despite public perception, no such miracle injection or procedure exists, and Dr. Hess is obliged to explain the real facts about stem cell cures and treatments.

“Some patients are so desperate that they offer up themselves to be the first patient to try the stem cells,” says Dr. Hess, a physician and neurologist recognized as one of America’s leading stem cell researchers. “I can’t blame them; there are few effective treatments for their diseases and they are looking for any ray of hope. They have also been influenced by stem cell exaggerations in the media.”

Separating the scientific and medical facts about stem cells from media-enabled fiction is one reason why Dr. Hess, Professor and Chairman of the Department of Neurology at the Medical College of Georgia, strives to do in the mini-documentary *The Science of Stem Cells: Finding Cures and Protecting Life*. “People need to become better educated about the stem cell issue,” says Dr. Hess.

Dr. Hess raises issues that are rarely examined in full by the media in covering

embryonic stem cell research. His insights are included in a comprehensive educational campaign currently underway in New Jersey, where voters will decide the fate of a \$450 million statewide bond initiative that, if passed, will authorize state-sponsored embryo-destructive research and human cloning.

STEM CELLS — WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

Scientists call stem cells tiny building blocks of the body with an ability to repair or even replace damaged cells or tissues and lead to cures and treatments for a wide range of illnesses and conditions. A key issue highlighted in the documentary is the little-known fact that certain kinds of stem cells found naturally in the body, called *adult stem cells*, are already being used to treat suffering patients.

There is no evidence yet that embryonic stem cell research — experiments utilizing live human embryos that are always destroyed in the process — have cured *anyone* of *anything*. Embryo-destructive advocates speak of the “hope” for cures and treatments, they also admit that any such cures or treatments are decades away from happening — if they ever happen at all. The hype surrounding calls for funding

embryonic stem cell research raises false, cruel hopes for patients.

As an accomplished, published adult stem cell researcher working on the front lines in the search for cures, Dr. Hess reminds documentary viewers about adult stem cell discoveries that are already helping thousands of patients in the United States and around the world.

Adult stem cell researchers like Dr. Hess bristle when attacked by critics who say they put a moral argument — the destruction of a human embryo — ahead of human suffering and medical cures that are “just around the corner.” Nothing could be further from the truth.

“As a physician, I deal with these very tragic situations all the time and I am very sensitive to what’s going on. I desperately want to help,” explains Dr. Hess. “But the fact is, a lot of us (researchers) believe that the biggest bang for the buck is with adult stem cell research. It’s going to get us to a real cure or treatment for more patients much faster.”

To view *The Science of Stem Cells: Finding Cures and Protecting Lives* visit www.RespectLifeToday.org.

Written by: Chuck Weber, Executive Director of SaintMax Worldwide