



New Jersey Catholic Stem Cell Research Education Campaign

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New Jersey stem cell bond issue likely leads to exploitation of young women

Nurse and bio-ethicist issues warning in short documentary now available in parishes

Jennifer Lahl isn't just frustrated, she's outraged.

Trained as a nurse and educated in bioethics, she's frustrated that more people aren't aware that the practice of embryonic stem cell research involves the cloning, manipulation and destruction of living embryos. But as a wife and mother with a daughter of her own, she's outraged that the forces promoting embryonic stem cell research are willing to push proposals requiring human egg harvesting that risks the future health and fertility of child-bearing age egg donors.

"The cloning research the cloners want to do will require millions of eggs," explains Lahl, Founder and National Director of the Center for Bioethics and Culture Network (www.thecbc.org). "There's only one place eggs come from — young women. There is no egg fairy."

Lahl's dire warning about the consequences of embryonic stem cell research and human egg harvesting is conveyed in the documentary **The Science of Stem Cells: Finding Cures and Protecting Lives**. Her message resonates in New Jersey this fall, where voters are preparing to decide the fate of a statewide ballot initiative that, if passed, would authorize \$450 million for embryonic stem cell research.

Lahl helps lead an unlikely coalition of feminists from across the religious and

political spectrum who oppose embryonic stem cell research for a little known, but critically important reason: it poses a danger to young women.

Her coalition—one that includes "Pro-Choice" and "Pro-Life" feminists—is calling for an immediate moratorium on embryonic stem cell research because of their concern for the safety and health of women who they fear will be exploited as egg donors (www.handsoffourovaryes.com).

Many following the embryonic stem cell debate accept the notion that research will be conducted on so-called "left over" embryos, created as part of the *in-vitro fertilization* or IVF process. But Lahl says this cache of "embryos on ice" is insufficient for what most scientists have in mind. They will need to create millions more live embryos through human cloning, and human cloning always requires one unique element: the human egg.



Jennifer Lahl

Founder and National Director of the Center for Bioethics and Culture Network (www.thecbc.org)

To extract these eggs, women are given powerful drugs that stimulate ovaries and produce abnormally large numbers of eggs, which are then harvested during a surgical procedure. This stimulating drug can cause a condition known as Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome. There are virtually no long-term studies about the impact of this condition—something Lahl finds unacceptable. But what we do know is frightening enough.

“The symptoms of Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome can be everything from bloating, cramping, swelling and mood swings, all the way up to more serious risks like stroke, organ failure, reproductive cancers and even death. It’s rare, but women do die from this.”

Human egg donation is already causing a stir as cash-strapped college students and others sell their limited supply of eggs to IVF clinics. Lahl says if embryonic stem cell research becomes widespread, the implications could be disastrous.

“We have to ask ourselves: what does this (embryonic stem cell research) mean? What does this mean to our young women, and to poor women here and around the world? Until we know these answers the risks are too great. “Pro-Choice” or “Pro-Life,” my feminist colleagues are united in the fact that we want women to be safe, well, healthy and protected. We don’t want a biotechnology that abuses them, that profits off their bodies.”

“You don’t have to be an expert to know that we don’t do research on the backs of others. I just say, how dare us put their health on the line and play with their future fertility—and be so casual about it.”

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

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