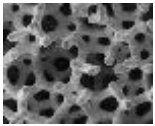


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Gov. Granholm spoke about her stance for stem cell research at Tuesday's meeting in the SSB.



So small, yet so volatile: a microscopic view of an embryonic stem cell.

Stem Cell debate brings governor, researchers to UM-D's town hall

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The Michigan Citizens for Stem Cell Research and Cures (MCSRC) and the Genetics Policy Institute (GPI) held a stem cell research town hall meeting in the auditorium of the Social Sciences Building last Tuesday at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

The event featured a wide variety of speakers including UM-D Chancellor Daniel Little, Governor Jennifer Granholm, representatives from the MCSRC and GPI, Eve Herold-author of "The Stem Cell Wars" and other proponents of stem cell research.

State representative Andy Meisner, a strong proponent of current measures aimed at decreasing Michigan's restrictions against stem cell research also attended.

The event was aimed at educating the audience about what stem cell research is, Michigan's current strict restrictions against it and how the removal of such restrictions can help the Michigan economy and increase the chances of finding a cure for many chronic degenerative diseases. Approximately 45 people attended the event.

The MCSRC helped organize the event so that after the presentation of the facts about the issue each person would be able to "form their own opinion about stem cell research." One of the speakers characterized the issue of stem cell research as "not a democratic or republican issue, but a human issue."

James Eliason, Ph.D. a faculty member from the Barbara Ann Karmanos Institute gave a brief overview of the biology of stem cell research. He explained the difference between embryonic, fetal and adult stem cells and the special potential embryonic stem cells have to differentiate into different types of cells.

Governor Jennifer Granholm, who is currently running for re-election against republican Dick DeVos, is a

strong advocate for stem cell research. "It's been frustrating to encounter misperceptions," she said in regards to public opinions about stem cell research.

Granholtm insisted that lifting Michigan's current ban against stem cell research would lead to the discovery of cures for many degenerative diseases and strengthen Michigan's economy by resulting in as many as 15,000 new jobs and revenue for the state.

"I was impressed that the governor was so willing to take such a strong stance on this [issue]," UM-D senior Melissa Fava said, "especially during election time." Governor Granholtm left the event immediately after completing her short address to the audience.

According to Eve Herold, author of "The Stem Cell Wars," there are more than 100 million patients suffering from chronic degenerative diseases in America with no cure. She said that among the most common misconceptions about stem cells are facts about their origins, the association between acquiring embryonic stem cells and abortion and what the difference is between embryonic and adult stem cells is.

"The rights of cells must not shadow the rights of living, suffering people," Herold said.

Currently, legislature is being pushed to pass in the state government. These measures would remove the ban on stem cell research and strengthen the ban on human cloning.

Each year thousands of embryos are thrown out at fertility clinics across the country. Many speakers at the town hall meeting argued that these embryos should be made available for stem cell research instead of being discarded.

The final speaker at the event was Danny Heumann from the Daniel Heumann Fund for Spinal Cord Research. His Virginia based foundation has raised over \$5 million for research on spinal cord injury and other neurodegenerative diseases.

In 1985, at the age of 18, Heumann was in a car crash and has been a paraplegic ever since. He spoke about his personal struggles and recited a passage from the Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream Speech," to reiterate his dream of a cure for his paralysis.

He called stem cell research?"the civil rights movement of the 21st century."

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