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Korean Cloning Star Receives Award from U.S. Organization

Korean geneticist and stem cell expert Dr. Hwang Woo-suk received an award from a U.S.-based organization for his medical breakthroughs. During a pro-stem cell research forum in Houston, Texas, scientists and experts in diverse fields such as law and economics lauded his contributions in therapeutic cloning.

Professor Hwang Woo-suk of Seoul National University received the first Global Achievement Award from the Florida-based Genetics Policy Institute in recognition of his recent medical breakthrough. The honor was granted to Korea's cloning pioneer on the sidelines of the "Stem Cell Policy and Advocacy Summit" over the weekend in Houston, Texas.

The purpose of the summit on embryonic stem cells was to overcome such negative legislation and opposition on therapeutic cloning and secure adequate funding for the research.

"As I stand here before you today, we are within reach of our goal. Hope is on the horizon." Hwang said. "The research coming out of Korea, it just keeps continuing and I am so grateful to you."

Last month, Professor Hwang's research team at Seoul National University made headlines by creating the world's first embryonic stem cells that genetically match those of injured or sick patients. Among the speaker at the summit was Gerald Schatten, a reproductive scientist with the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine.

The Houston summit comes at a sensitive time, stirring opposition from religious groups, including the Roman Catholic Church, which says the research destroys life, because it uses human embryos.

In related news, Dr. Hwang Woo-suk and Korea's top Catholic leaders are likely to meet soon to discuss the ethical debate over stem cell research. The Seoul Diocese in a statement said Arch Bishop Cheong Jin-suk wanted to meet Professor

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Hwang in person to share his thoughts on the controversial research.

The statement came in response to Hwang's remarks expressing willingness to meet Catholic and other religious leaders to seek better understanding. The Catholic circle has labeled the research as "life-taking activity." But the Seoul Diocese suggested that adult stem-cell research could be an alternative to embryonic stem-cell research.

Arirang TV

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