



Adult Stem Cell Talking-Point Demolished

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WASHINGTON, July 17 /U.S. Newswire/ -- On July 13, three stem cell experts published a letter in the journal "Science", along with detailed supporting data, that has demolished the lynchpin argument and key talking point of the religious right and others who oppose the expansion of funding for embryonic stem cell research.

Dr. David Prentice of the Family Research Council had long- promoted a list of 65 medical conditions supposedly treated by adult stem cells, thereby sending the message that adult stem cells were currently delivering treatments and thus there was no need to fund embryonic stem cell research.

The letter to "Science" stated in its concluding paragraph "By promoting the falsehood that adult stem cell treatments are already in general use for 65 diseases and injuries, Prentice and those who repeat his claims mislead laypeople and cruelly deceive patients."

"Only nine of the so-called treatments were actually approved by the FDA. In fact, much of the Prentice list was comprised of anecdotal data drawn from such sources as testimony from Congressional hearings, distortions of published research reports and even a newspaper clipping," said Bernard Siegel, executive director of the Genetics Policy Institute.

Siegel said, "The misleading treatment list has been the most cherished tool of the opponents of embryonic stem cell research and the list was often cited by prominent research foes such as Senator Sam Brownback of Kansas and most recently by Ann Coulter, in her book where she expanded the list to 80."

"The Pro-Cures movement supports funding of adult and embryonic stem cell research. Both have shown promise. We call for truth in the stem cell debate. Adult stem cell research complements embryonic but is not a substitute or alternative."

"The Genetics Policy institute applauds the timely analysis by Shane Smith of the Children's Neurobiological Solutions Foundation, William Neaves of the Stowers Institute of Medical Research and Steven Teitelbaum of Washington University. The letter marks a pivotal moment in the stem cell debate. Where lives are at stake, the public should not be misled. It is wonderful that reputable scientists checked David Prentice's footnotes."

Shane Smith also serves as the Senior Science Advisor to the Genetics Policy Institute.

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