

American Thoracic Society

Human Embryonic Stem Cells/Fetal Tissue Research

<https://www.thoracic.org/advocacy/comments-testimony/resources/finats-fetaltissueboardstatement7-20.pdf>

In a statement made in July 2020, ATS thanked the NIH Human Fetal Tissue Research Ethics Advisory Board for allowing ATS to speak in favor of using the fetal tissue (many of which comes from aborted babies), as well as to ask the NIH Advisory Board to not impose restrictions on the use of human fetal tissue for research:

- ◆ “The ATS recognizes the past contributions to science and medicine made possible by incorporating the use of human fetal tissues into rational and ethical research projects. **Studies with human fetal tissues helped define the mechanisms for the production of pulmonary surfactant, leading to new interventional strategies to combat the leading cause of death in preterm infants**, an affliction that took the life of the child of a sitting president of the United States, John F. Kennedy. Of equal importance, cell lines derived from human fetal tissues are a major resource for development of vaccines, including those for respiratory viruses similar to SARS-CoV2.”
- ◆ **“Because there are no animal models for any of these conditions that fully recapitulate human disease, human fetal tissues and cells remain invaluable for assessing environmental factor exposures as well as effects of hormones, growth factors, and other agents (e.g., drugs) on lung development.** Beyond lung development, human fetal lung tissue has been used in studies of lung cancer and hereditary diseases such as cystic fibrosis.”
- ◆ “The ATS urges the NIH Human Fetal Tissue Research Ethics Advisory Board to use discretion and refrain from imposing any restrictions upon the use of human fetal tissues in research studies.”

<https://www.thoracic.org/about/newsroom/newsletters/research-news-quarterly/resources/september-2019.pdf>

The American Thoracic Society wrote an article in their 2019 *Research News Quarterly* that shared their concern with the Trump administration’s guidelines for NIH concerning the use of fetal tissue in research. ATS argued for the “benefits” of fetal tissue in research throughout the entire article:

On June 5, in response to the Trump administration's policy, the American Thoracic Society issued a press release expressing concern about this ban, and its potential impact on research to advance cures for respiratory, critical care, and sleep disorders. The purpose of this article is to educate ATS society members about the ban on intramural NIH fetal tissue research and new NIH guidelines, their potential impact, as well as the past and current benefits of human fetal tissue research.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20211128003634/https://www.thoracic.org/statements/resources/research/stemcell.pdf>

In an older statement from 2006, ATS announced their disapproval of then President George W. Bush's "limitations" on human embryonic stem cell research, as well as their principles on human embryonic stem cell research:

ATS supports the following principles regarding human embryonic stem cell research to ensure that this field receives adequate federal funding for its growth while still making certain that the research is conducted in a legal and ethical manner: I. Human embryonic stem cell research is a relatively new technology that offers great potential for providing new insights into the causes of disease and for the development of novel and effective therapies. II. Though significant scientific advances in the area of human embryonic stem cell research may be possible through use of private and state support, federal funding for human embryonic stem cell research is necessary to continue the very highest quality research in this area, to foster the growth of this important new field of investigation, and to encourage young scientists to enter the field. III. The ban on the use of federal funds for research using human embryonic stem cells generated after August 9, 2001, should be removed. IV. Scientists working in this field should be permitted to derive stem cells from embryos that are stored at in vitro fertilization (IVF) clinics. In all cases, informed consent must be obtained for the donation of the embryos, financial inducements must not be permitted for donation of the embryos, and there must be a clear separation between the process of informed consent and the scientists doing the research. V. Federal funds also should be permitted for the creation and use of embryonic stem cell lines by somatic cell nuclear

transfer. Again, informed consent must be obtained from the patients from whom the somatic cell nuclei are obtained and from the women donating the eggs, and all other guidelines should be followed. This technology holds promise as a tool for providing increased understanding of many diseases as well as for creating therapeutic cells immunologically compatible with the patients being treated. VI. The ATS acknowledges and respects the ethical debate surrounding the use of human embryos for research purposes and stands firmly opposed to the use of somatic cell nuclear transfer for the purpose of creating a fetus or for other reproductive purposes. VII. **The ATS supports ongoing efforts to establish guidelines and responsible practice of embryonic stem cell research, such as those being developed by the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies (11).**

Abortion

<https://web.archive.org/web/20230919151226/https://www.thoracic.org/about/newsroom/press-releases/roe-v-wade.php>

ATS's interim president at the time, Gregory Downey, issued a statement on behalf of ATS about the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in 2022:

After five decades, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, effectively putting the lives of countless women at risk. The decision raises deep concerns about the ability of women to access the health care they need and the autonomy to make the most important and personal decisions free of government interference. The Court's decision erodes progress in establishing health care equity for everyone and guarantees that the most vulnerable – the poor and people of color will remain just so. Legislating women's bodies flies in the face of a society that claims to value growth, progress, and liberty. Just as troubling as the court's decision is the subsequent plethora of state bills proposing to impose significant restrictions, if not outright bans, on abortion. These bills will have significant, damaging effects on the patient-doctor relationship. As a professional society, we cannot turn a blind eye to actions that threaten the freedom and health of our members. In light of the Court's decision the American Thoracic Society calls on Congress to immediately enact

legislation protecting a women's right to choose. Furthermore, we encourage our colleagues to call on legislators in their home states to pass bills to strengthen access to the full spectrum of reproductive health services.

Other

<https://research.thoracic.org/about/our-partners.php>

ATS lists the American Lung Association and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation as partners of their organization. Both organizations heavily support the use of contraception or human embryonic stem cells in research.



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