

Stem Cell Research (Library in a Book)

David E. Newton

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One of the most controversial debates in scientific research today focuses on the use of embryonic stem cells in medical research. Recent discoveries suggest that stem cells exist within embryos and are even more plastic than adult cells, meaning that they are capable of developing into virtually any type of cell found in a living body. This discovery has raised the possibility of using embryonic stem cells for the treatment of a host of medical conditions, including Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, spinal cord injuries, strokes, burns, heart disease, diabetes, osteoarthritis, and rheumatoid arthritis. In each instance, the transplantation of embryonic stem cells into the patient's body is expected to result in the growth of healthy new tissue or organs that have been damaged by the disease being treated. However, opponents of this scientific procedure doubt the validity of the scientific premises behind these therapeutic uses and oppose the destruction of human embryos for further research. Current federal law and regulations allow researchers to use federal funds to conduct some types of stem cell research using adult stem cells, but not embryonic stem cells, which significantly slows the progress of this possibly life-altering medical study. Exploring the political and ethical issues associated with this area of study, "Stem Cell Research" gives students and general readers alike a comprehensive look at both the science and the controversy surrounding this groundbreaking research. This one-stop reference provides clear and essential information needed to define, understand, and research this important issue objectively. Covering court cases, legislation, and relevant policies, this volume also includes a chronology; a glossary; a guide to further research; an annotated bibliography, an integral part of the "Library in a Book" series; appendixes; as well as an index.



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