

Taking Sides Analysis Report

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Course: BIOL 1090 Human Biology

Book: Taking Sides: Clashing Views in Health and Society, Ninth Edition

Issue Number: 8

Title of Issue: Should Embryonic Stem Cell Research Be Permitted?

1. Author and major thesis of the *Yes* side:

Professor Jeffrey Hart discusses the benefits stem cell research offers to scientific discovery and to those with diseases and questions the definition of embryos as human beings.

2. Author and major thesis of the *No* side:

Writer Ramesh Ponnuru argues that a human being's existence begins at conception and it is immoral to experiment on it regardless of the assumption that doing so could save others' lives.

3. What fallacies of question-framing are made by the authors of the text?

Yes side: Hart implies that all of the beliefs presented by the magazine (whose beliefs he disagrees with) are politically inspired only. Thus, he implies that the magazine chooses its position on embryonic stem-cell research based on politics more than morality or "Actuality."

No side: Ponnuru argues that since the majority of Americans are against embryonic stem-cell research, and since he agrees with these beliefs too, than his views are justified and are moral by popular consent.

4. Briefly state in your own words two facts presented by each side:

Yes side: 1. Stem cells are used for research when they are at the level of development known as "blastocyst."

2. There are about 100,000 fertilized cells frozen in maternity clinics in America.

No side: 1. The terms "blastocyst," "adolescent," and "newborn" are stages of development in a being, not different types of beings.

2. It is impossible to identify the point when a being becomes sentient or conscious.

5. Briefly state in your own words two opinions presented by each side:

Yes side: 1. Apple seeds are not an apple orchard as human embryos are not a human being.

2. It is obvious that American Universities are going to lose their best embryonic scientists to other countries' whose laws do not ban embryonic testing.

No side: 1. Disagreeing about what is moral is no reason to be immoral.

2. Embryonic testing is against the Declaration of Independence's statement "all men are created equal" because such embryos are treated as things rather than humans.

6. Briefly identify as many fallacies on the *Yes* side as you can:

7. Briefly identify as many fallacies on the *No* side as you can:

8. All in all, which author impressed you as being the most empirical in presenting his or her thesis? **Why?** Although I disagree with Ponnuru's anti-stem cell research (*No* side) arguments, I found less opinion in his essay than I saw in Hart's. I found his description that an embryo is simply a stage of the human life to be a scientific fact that very strongly supported his viewpoint, while Hart's essay seemed more political opinion rather than scientific fact.

10. Are there any reasons to believe the writers are biased? If so, why do they have these biases? I have done research on both of these writers, and they are both famous and often published for being very outspoken on their sides of this issue. Each of them wrote a book about their strong opinions of this issue, so they may want to create interest in these books, even for people who disagree with their side.

10. Which side do you personally feel is most correct now that you have reviewed the material in these articles? **Why?** I agree with the pro-stem cell research (*Yes* side) argument. I enjoyed reading the political stories related by Hart, because you really can't escape politics when discussing embryonic research, and also enjoyed most of the facts presented by Ponnuru, although I disagree with his moral inference regarding these facts. A small, otherwise unwanted group of extremely useful cells ("medical waste" according to Hart) being saved instead of being used to help the many humans already alive who suffer with diseases is actually quite immoral, in my opinion.