



RHTP statement on development and use of somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) for reproductive and research purposes

The Reproductive Health Technologies Project (RHTP) has long advocated for the safe, ethical and appropriate development of technologies that women can use to promote their reproductive health and well-being.

RHTP believes research using somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) holds the potential to expand our knowledge of human physiology and with that, to develop safe, effective treatments for a broad array of diseases and injuries. The promise of human benefit from research is significant and justifies use of pre-implantation embryos in such research. RHTP opposes, however, the use of SCNT for the purposes of creating a human reproductive clone. In addition to concerns about the safety and efficacy of this technology, there are extensive ethical and social concerns that preclude the advisability of proceeding with the development or use of human reproductive cloning anytime in the near future.

SCNT research holds potential for unintended consequences, as well as intended uses that may have adverse outcomes. To maximize the benefits of this research and minimize the risk – both to individuals and society at large – RHTP calls for policy proposals that will enhance and strengthen existing policy and regulatory guidelines which protect human subjects in research and ensure that consumers can rely on the safety and efficacy of FDA approved products. In establishing such federal or state oversight, the following guiding principles should be observed:

- The scientific rationale, as well as the risks and benefits, of proposed SCNT research are evaluated with public oversight and accountability;
- Short and long term safety and efficacy data on SCNT is made available to the general public on a timely basis and in an appropriate format;
- Informed consent and confidentiality of all participants, including donors of genetic material who will not benefit directly from research, is ensured;
- Adequate protections are established to minimize the potential that embryos created for use in SCNT research are used for the purposes of reproduction;
- Payment for gametes and other genetic materials used in SCNT research, which exceed the costs of participation, are prohibited;
- The same regulatory guidelines and enforcement mechanisms should apply to all SCNT research, whether publicly or privately funded;
- Inappropriate activities are discontinued and violators subject to civil penalties.

The mission of the Reproductive Health Technologies Project is to advance the ability of every woman of any age to achieve full reproductive freedom with access to the safest, most effective, appropriate and acceptable technologies for ensuring her own health and controlling her fertility. Because of the fast-paced nature of SCNT research and clinical innovations in the use of reproductive genetic technologies, RHTP will regularly revisit its position on these issues.