



Multiple System Atrophy Trust Policy: Stem Cell Research

The Trustees of the Multiple System Atrophy Trust recognise that the issues surrounding embryonic stem cell research and therapeutic cloning give rise to serious ethical and moral questions. In principle, however, they are prepared to fund projects which may involve stem cell research provided it has been satisfactorily demonstrated to them that such research is legal and has both a sound scientific basis and the potential to lead to viable treatments and/or a cure for MSA.

Adopted by Trustee Board June 2014.

Background information on regulation of stem cell research in the UK

The UK has a well-established regulatory framework for stem cell research. Embryonic stem cell research is allowed subject to a licence from the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA). Licences are granted only if the HFEA is satisfied that any proposed use of embryos is absolutely necessary for the purposes of the research. Licenced research can only take place on embryos created in vitro - embryos that have developed from eggs fertilised outside the body. Licensed research can only take place on embryos up to 14 days. Stem cells are isolated from the blastocyst much sooner than this – at five to six days. Embryos that are used must have been donated with appropriate consent or have been created by non-reproductive cloning.

Further details are outlined in the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act (1990) and the subsequent Human Fertilisation and Embryology (Research Purposes) Regulations 2001.