



Multiple System Atrophy Trust

Stem Cell Research Policy

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 has both a sound scientific basis and the potential to lead to viable treatments and/or a cure for MSA and is conducted within a robust ethical and legal framework, in line with UK regulations.

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.
- Licensed 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](#) (2008) and the subsequent [Human Fertilisation and Embryology \(Research Purposes\) Regulations](#) 2001.

Additionally, the [Human Tissue Act](#) 2004 regulates the removal, storage, and use of human tissue, including stem cells, and requires ethical approval for specific research projects involving human tissue. Establishments storing human tissue must be licensed.

The UK Stem Cell Bank has established a [Code of Practice](#) for the use of human stem cell lines, providing a framework for ethical and practical standards in stem cell research, including the use of human embryonic stem cell lines and other human tissue-derived stem cell lines.

Requirements for Researchers funded by MSA Trust

Ethical approval from relevant committees must be obtained prior to commencing research.

Grant holders must provide regular updates on their research progress and demonstrate compliance with regulatory requirements if requested.

Researchers are expected to uphold the highest standards of scientific integrity and ethical conduct.

Adopted by Trustee Board June 2014

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