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Homework #8

Top 10 Ethical Issues:

1. Life Support
2. "Smart" prosthetics (Athletic prosthetics)
3. Brain implants
4. Stem cell research
5. X-Ray and other imaging radiation
6. Machine assisted living
7. Homeopathy
8. Prescription drugs
9. Bioterrorism
10. Cloning

In my opinion, one of the most important current bioethics issues is stem cell research. I firmly believe that stem cell research is necessary for the progress of humankind, due to its potential ability to cure many diseases and health problems that would be too complex to solve otherwise. But as with every ethics issue, there are two sides to this argument. The pro stem cell research side is for using adult stem cells to conduct research, while the con stem cell research side is against stem cell research because they believe it is immoral to harvest a certain type of stem cell.

Currently there is no widely accepted "correct" answer that both sides agree on. Most people educated on the subject will lean towards the pro side because they know that the con side only targets a very small portion of stem cell research. I believe that over time, as more people become educated on the subject, the correct answer will start to change to purely pro. If stem cells are harvested correctly, the research about them can only provide positive benefits to the world. That is why I am pro stem cell research.

The pro side of the argument is that researching and understanding stem cells better can help cure a wide range of very harmful medical problems. For example, stem cells have the possibility to help cure things such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, Spinal Cord Injuries, and cancer (http://www.experiment-resources.com/stem-cell-pros-and-cons.html). The list goes on, but I feel that those are some of the most important areas where stem cell research can help. The pro side also knows that there are multiple ways to gather stem cells. One very popular way is to harvest the cells from umbilical cords. This causes no harm to anybody as the umbilical cord would not be used for anything else anyway. This is a widely used and very accepted method (http://www.allaboutpopularissues.org/pros-and-cons-of-stem-cell-research.htm).

The con side of the argument is based on the method of harvesting stem cells from embryos. This is generally a highly religious stance, which brings in its own pros and cons. Generally, the con side believes that we should not disrupt human life, and that humans should not be trying to play God by essentially aborting a fetus very early in its growth. Some also say that stem cell research will just lead to more knowledge on how to clone humans, and since they are against that they are against stem cell research as well.

**Sources:**

<http://bioethics.net/>

<http://bioethics.od.nih.gov/>

<http://www.allaboutpopularissues.org/pros-and-cons-of-stem-cell-research.htm>

<http://www.experiment-resources.com/stem-cell-pros-and-cons.html>

<http://bootstrike.com/Genetics/StemCells/proandcon.html>