

Introduction

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It has been almost a decade since the first embryonic stem cells were isolated. Since that time, stem cell research has remained an extremely high profile scientific endeavour. It has been the focus of ongoing media scrutiny, regulatory oversight and intense ethical debate. In the midst of this controversy, the Canadian scientific community has continued to work. Incremental advances have materialized and the possibility of future clinical applications remains real.

Given this research activity, the public investment and the persistence of ethical concern, our Stem Cell Network research team felt it essential to explore the most pressing research ethics challenges and provide practical recommendations on how best to move forward. To this end, topics of inquiry were selected after interviewing a broad range of relevant Canadian stakeholders.¹ We then commissioned a paper on each of the selected topics, with the goal of informing our policy deliberations. These papers were presented at a February 2007 interdisciplinary workshop in Montreal, an event that led to the recent publication of a paper entitled “Stem Cell Research Ethics: Consensus Statement on Emerging Issues.”²

The articles in this issue of the *Health Law Review* are modified versions of the workshop background papers. Given that they incorporate the comments and suggestions that emerged at the workshop and throughout the entire deliberative process, I believe they should serve as a wonderful and enduring resource. Indeed, I would like to thank all of the authors for their outstanding contributions, not only in the form of these papers, but in the discussions that led

- 1 Ubaka Ogbogu, “A Review of Pressing Ethical Issues Relevant to Stem Cell Translational Research” *Health Law Review* Volume 14, Number 3 (2006).
- 2 Timothy Caulfield, et al., *J Obstet Gynaecol Can* 2007;29(10):843–848

to our consensus paper. These papers cover a tremendous amount of territory relevant to stem cell research policy, including an analysis of public perceptions and attitudes, the development of a clinical trial registry for stem cell therapies, conflicts of interest and consent issues, and governance strategies.

I would like to extend my appreciation to all of the workshop participants – an incredible group of renowned academics and policy makers. I would also like to thank the Stem Cell Network for their continued funding support and Ubaka Ogbogu for his wonderful leadership of this initiative.



**Michael
E. Enzle
1948-2007**

Michael was a gentle giant who lived the ethics he espoused, respecting every person and his or her opinion while ensuring that significant academic and policy work

in the area of stem cell research ethics moved forward, as evidenced by his contribution in this volume.

Given his profound impact on the Canadian scene, it seems appropriate to dedicate this volume of *the Health Law Review* to Michael - an individual of remarkable character with an intellect and disposition ideally suited to the discipline of ethics.



Michael was the Chair of the Stem Cell Oversight Committee of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. He was an effective leader in a difficult time of transition who took on the onerous task of setting up the committee and making it work. As its chair, he made major contributions to the ethical development and implementation of stem cell research internationally. His grasp of research ethics, honed by his service as Director of the University of Alberta's Human Research Protections Office, chair of the Education Committee of the National Council on Ethics in Human Research, and member of the Health Canada Research Ethics Board, stood Canada in good stead. Michael's steadfast patience, calm demeanour, and humility are among the many admirable traits for which he will be remembered.

Those associated with the Stem Cell Oversight Committee sent the following observations about him:

"Mike had a rare talent for building a consensus on contentious issues. He worked quietly behind the scenes to create an efficient and sound work environment for the committee."

"I admired the way he would sum up wide ranging comments into something very precise that reflected the tone

of our discussions so very well, moving proceedings along smoothly once all points had been expressed without allowing us to start rehashing unnecessarily."

"What I really liked and will remember about Mike was the way that he made sure that I, as layperson, was not only included, but that I felt included. He had such a direct way of looking at you straight in the eye, not only when talking to you, but also when listening that is not common."

"Michael me semblait un fin renard, rusé, mais profondément humain et profondément respectueux tant des opinions que des valeurs, un leader d'une main de fer dans un gant de velours."

"Mike was a gentle man and an absolute gentleman. He was pragmatic, thoughtful and skilled in the application of abstract principles to complex real-world situations. He was a calm voice of reason in a turbulent environment, a quiet but very effective leader. He will be missed both as someone with great depth of knowledge in and passion for research ethics, and as a wonderful human being."

