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Begin with stem cells

Research great opportunity for Michigan, world despite controversy; scientists would need to be careful, thorough

Stem cell research could find a home in Michigan, creating new opportunities that would help the medical world.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm endorsed a bill relaxing Michigan's law that would allow embryonic stem cell research. The bill, which was proposed in June 2005 by Rep. Andrew Meisner, D-Ferndale, would bring more researchers back to Michigan to conduct research on human embryos.

It makes sense, especially after her State of the State address, to want to bring back more research to Michigan and help stimulate the economy. It makes even more sense for MSU — a research institution — to help further discoveries in the field.

But stem cell research lies at the center of much controversy, such as the question of whether the destruction of an embryo is also the destruction of a potential life.

The possibility of stem cell research brings up a lot of interesting questions. When does life begin? Are we considered humans as embryos, during the first term of pregnancy or when we become a separate entity from our mothers?

Pro-life groups protest the use of destroying human embryos for research because they say it destroys a potential life.

We can't say for sure when life begins: All we can say is the potential stem cell research has.

Scientists have the potential to make medical advances as they learn more through stem cell research.

Doctors could replace organs and tissues for people in need of transplants. They could also use tissues and cells to treat Parkinson's disease, Alzheimer's disease, strokes or even spinal cord injuries. Medical conditions that have plagued the world might finally be treated with increased research capabilities.

With this new mass of knowledge comes great power. Stem cell research is crossing into knowledge and theories that have never been tested. The possibility for making ethical slip-ups is frightening and a real threat.

Scientists and researchers must work slowly and cautiously in order to gain more information without having catastrophic results caused by their new technology.

And in light of the recent discovery of falsified stem cell research from South Korea, scientists need to follow strict guidelines that will ensure good science and accuracy.

Stem cell research should be welcomed in Michigan, but scientists need to be careful with their knowledge.

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