

## **Stem Cell Research**

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Stem cells can be derived from a variety of sources, including embryos, fetal material, cord blood and adult tissues. Recent progress in stem cell biology has indicated that stem cells have the potential to provide effective therapies for a wide range of conditions which have a genetic basis and for which, at present, there is little or no effective treatment. As such this research is of great interest to many of GIG's member groups and the individuals and families they support.

There is at present no clear evidence as to the potential superiority (on scientific grounds) of stem cells from any one source as compared with any other as a route to treatments for genetic disease. The majority of scientists actively undertaking stem cells research advocate keeping all options open unless and until there is clear evidence to favour one source over another.

As a lay body, GIG is not qualified to offer comment on the scientific potential offered by research using one source of stem cells over those from any other origin.

GIG recognises that the use of stem cells from embryonic or fetal sources is ethically troubling for some groups or individuals. We respect these views fully. Nevertheless, following extensive consultation with our member groups, and after taking advice from relevant professionals knowledgeable in this work, GIG takes the view that all forms of stem cell research that have been approved and licensed by the relevant research ethics committee and (where required) by other bodies such as the HFEA should be encouraged. Indeed GIG calls for the allocation of resources to be such that high quality scientific research on stem cells from all sources can be vigorously pursued in order that speedy progress can be made towards realising the potential of stem cells to prevent, alleviate or control currently intractable conditions.