

Study: Skin cells turned into stem cells

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The controversy over embryonic stem cell research may become moot with a procedure that turns skin cells into what appear to be embryonic stem cells.

A Harvard University research team said it devised the procedure without having to use human eggs or make new human embryos in the process, The Washington Post reported Monday.

The technique uses laboratory-grown human embryonic stem cells -- such as ones President Bush previously approved for use by federally funded researchers, the Post said. Those cells are used "reprogram" genes in a person's skin cells, turning the skin cells into embryonic stem cells.

If confirmed by subsequent research, the procedure could end the bitter controversy that has stymied human embryonic stem cell research in the United States.

The research is detailed this week in the journal Science.

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