

Scientists urge Australian clone ban end

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Australian scientists are urging an end to a ban on therapeutic cloning, saying such cloning could lead to treatments for many diseases.

Australian ethicist Julian Savulescu argued this week it would be "immoral" not to allow the technique to be carried out because of its medical potential, the Sydney Morning Herald reported.

"This could save millions of lives," Savulescu, director of the Uehiro Center for Practical Ethics at Oxford University, told a committee reviewing Australia's laws regulating cloning and research on human embryos.

Speaking during a public hearing Wednesday in Sydney, Savulescu said if Australia did not lift the ban, it would be obliged on the same ethical grounds to ban cures that flowed from the technique.

Bernadette Tobin, director of the Plunkett Center for Ethics at the Australian Catholic University, said although embryos created by therapeutic cloning did not involve the union of an egg and a sperm, they were still human embryos and it would be wrong to destroy them.

The committee reviewing Australia's legislation is required to provide its recommendations to Parliament by Dec.19, the Herald reported.

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