

Embryonic stem cells can kill cancer cells

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University of Minnesota scientists, in groundbreaking research, say they have used human embryonic stem cells to kill cancer cells.

The stem cell scientists say they coaxed human embryonic stem cells to create cancer-killing cells in the laboratory, paving the way for possible future treatments for various types of cancers.

"This is the first published research to show the ability to make cells from human embryonic stem cells that are able to treat and fight cancer, especially leukemias and lymphomas," said Dr. Dan Kaufman, an assistant professor of medicine in the university's Stem Cell Institute and lead author of the study.

"We hear a lot about the potential of stem cells to treat conditions such as Parkinson's disease, diabetes, and Alzheimer's disease. This research suggests it is possible that we could use human embryonic stem cells as a source for immune cells that could better target and destroy cancer cells and potentially treat infections," Kaufman added.

Next, the researchers will test whether the human embryonic stem cell-derived natural killer cells can target cancer cells in animal models.

The study will be published in the Oct. 15 issue of the Journal of Immunology.

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