

Of mice and men: Stem cells and ethical uncertainties

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The recent creation of live mice from induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs) not only represents a remarkable scientific achievement, but also raises important issues, according to bioethicists at The Johns Hopkins University's Berman Institute of Bioethics.

In a letter published Oct. 28 in *Regenerative Medicine*, the authors advocate for clear ethical oversight of this research and pose key questions that warrant careful consideration.

The promise of iPSCs is that they will behave like [embryonic stem cells](#) and that their derivation will be both efficient and free of much of the moral controversy that has hampered embryonic stem cell research.

However, the considerable time and resources currently needed to create iPSCs impede their potential use in medicine, state the authors, who caution that there is no guarantee this more efficient approach demonstrated in [mice](#) will work in humans.

In addition, "these experiments involved the creation of [embryos](#), from which the live mice were successfully born," write Jeremy Sugarman, M.D., M.P.H., and Debra J.H. Mathews, Ph.D., both of the Berman Institute of Bioethics. "Paradoxically, this brings us full circle to the knotty questions related to the moral status of the embryo."

More information: *Regenerative Medicine:*
www.futuremedicine.com/loi/rme

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