

Outrage over S.Korean stem cell scandal official's new post

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Hundreds of South Korean scientists expressed outrage Wednesday after a controversial figure accused of covering up a notorious stem cell research fraud was appointed as the country's top technology official.

Park Ki-Young was appointed to head a newly-created [science](#) centre, putting her in charge of allocating government subsidies and budgets for [research projects](#).

But a decade ago Park was a key figure in a scandal involving the fabrication of research by prominent stem cell scientist Hwang Woo-Suk.

"Her name is far from innovation. The name is rather a nightmare to science and technology workers," a group of 240 young scientists said in a statement.

It called on President Moon Jae-In to scrap the appointment, announced earlier this week, accusing Park of remaining "unrepentant" despite being "at the centre" of the scandal surrounding Hwang.

The scientist was lauded as the "pride of Korea" after claiming to have derived stem cell lines from cloned human embryos—a world first—in two articles published in the journal *Science* in 2004 and 2005.

But his research was later found to be fraudulent and riddled with ethical lapses.

Park played a key role in supporting Hwang and his research projects with generous government subsidies when she served as a presidential aide for science and technology from 2004 to 2006.

She was also one of 15 co-authors of one of Hwang's Science papers.

She resigned after being accused of covering up crucial flaws in Hwang's stem cell study and sweeping under the carpet ethical lapses involved in Hwang's projects that used many human eggs.

Even so she went on to become a biology professor at Sunchon National University.

A labour union of government researchers issued a separate statement calling Park's new nomination a "death knell" for South Korean science and [technology](#).

The Biology Research Information Centre, a renowned online community of researchers which revealed Hwang's frauds, also joined the criticism, together with multiple activist groups and the country's three opposition parties, which asserted she was parachuted into the post because of her connections with Moon.

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