

# **Stem Cells and Moral Analogies: An Ethical Analysis**

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## **Abstract**

The public discussion over human embryonic stem cell research has been divisive, given the ethical, philosophical, and theological importance of the debate. In August of 2001, President Bush gave a public policy speech that laid out two major issues of concern: the sanctity of life argument and the utilitarian argument.

Most of the ethical discussion has centered on the first of these concerns, while not much has been said about the second. This paper focuses on the second area, namely the utilitarian argument that would favor the research use of embryos that would otherwise be destroyed, even if their sanctity is granted. This study examines the scientific and ethical contexts of embryonic stem cell research, and then looks at the concept of moral complicity that helps to inform the utilitarian argument. The paper then presents a moral analogy to add further clarity. The conclusion is that the utilitarian argument cannot justify embryonic stem cell research.

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