



# Embryonic stem cell research in the media

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# Outline

- Responsibilities of HFEA
- Importance of public information and debate
- Key issues for debate on hybrids

# HFEA key responsibilities

- To licence and regulate IVF and embryo research
- To hold register of treatments and offspring
- To inform the public and patients

# Importance of public information

- Website showing research licence applications
- Outcomes of applications and reasons
- Monitoring of research
- Public meetings, minutes of meetings, conferences

# Importance of debate and hearing views

- Online panel
- Consultations
- Surveys

# Key issues (hybrids)

- Need/benefit – why?
- Ethical boundary - slippery slope
- Disrespectful to status of embryo – specificity of species
- “yuk factor”

# Hybrids Consultation - Approach

- Written consultation document
- Deliberative groups taking place across the UK
- Public meeting (Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> June)
- Opinion poll – 2,000 participants

# Hybrids Consultation - Questions

- Do you think that the HFEA should issue licences to allow research using cytoplasmic hybrid embryos?
- Do you think that the law should in future permit the creation of true hybrid embryos for licensed research purposes?
- Do you think that the HFEA should in future issue licences to allow research using human chimera embryos?

# Media

➤ Emotive headlines

➤ Clear explanations

BLAIR NOT 100% AGAINST  
ANIMAL-HUMAN EMBRYOS

➤ Identification of issues

*Nobel scientists urge  
fertility watchdog to  
back hybrid embryos*

# Conclusion

- Need to work together
- Need to inform
- Need to ensure story is about the science

*Door left open  
for research  
using animals  
and humans*

Scientists to create 'frankenbunny' in big research leap