

Committee

In 2008, the Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research Advisory Committee of the National Research Council and Institute of Medicine published Amendments to the National Academies' Guidelines for Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research.

Section 2.0 (page 11) describes the establishment of an Institutional ESCRO “To provide oversight of all issues related to derivation and use of hES (human embryonic stem) cell lines and to facilitate education of investigators involved in hES cell research, each institution should have activities involving hES cells overseen by an Embryonic Stem Cell Research Committee (ESCRO).”

“An ESCRO committee should include independent representatives of the lay public as well as persons with expertise in developmental biology, stem cell research, molecular biology, assisted reproduction and ethical and legal issues in hES cell research.” (Since in Nebraska, development of human stem cell lines is not permitted, assisted reproduction input is potentially less relevant than in states that do not have this prohibition.)

“It must have suitable scientific, medical and ethical expertise to conduct its own review and should have the resources needed to coordinate the management of various other reviews required for a particular protocol.” (eg animal use, recombinant DNA, human subject research)

“But the ESCRO committee should not be a subcommittee of the IRB, as its responsibilities extend beyond human subject research.” (For example, in Nebraska, this includes ensuring that all hES cell lines employed are federally approved).

“The ESCRO Committee should

1. Provide oversight over all issues related to deviation and use of hES cell lines.
2. Review and approve the scientific merit of research protocols.
3. Review compliance of all in-house hES cell research with all relevant regulations and these guidelines.
4. Maintain registries of hES cell research conducted at the institution and hES cell lines derived (not relevant in Nebraska) or imported by institutional investigators.
5. Facilitate education of investigators involved in hES cell research.”

The UNMC Scientific Research Oversight Committee (SROC) undertakes all of these tasks and reports its actions to the UNMC IRB and the Chancellor.

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