

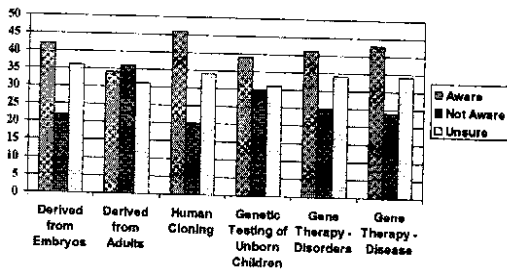
Public Attitudes Towards Stem Cell Applications and Gene Therapies



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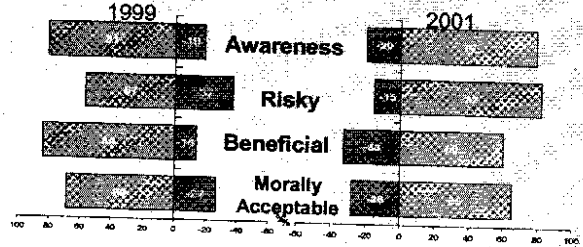
Since the high-profile public debate on stem cell usage in 2002 there has been a significant increase in awareness and acceptance of stem cell applications and gene therapies in Australia.

Awareness of Human Stem Cell Situations - 2002



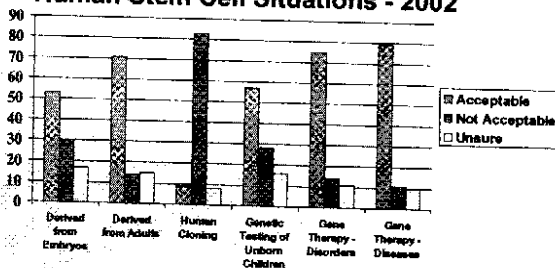
Legend: Agree (hatched), Disagree (solid)

Attitudes towards Testing of Embryos for Pre-disposition to Disease - 1999 & 2001

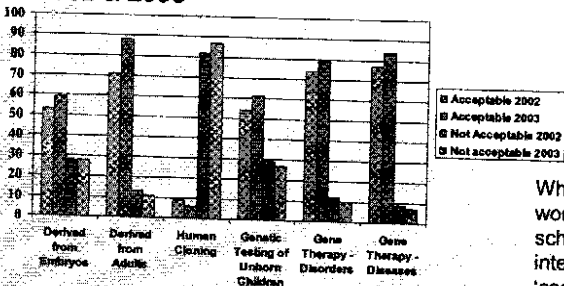


Before the public stem cell debate, the general trends of public attitudes towards testing of embryos for predisposition to diseases, from 1999 to 2001, were of a high awareness of embryo-related research, with an increase in perception of risk (from 57% in 1999 to 82% in 2001), a decrease in perception of benefit (84% in 1999 to 60% in 2001) and a decrease in perception of moral acceptability (from 69% to 65%).

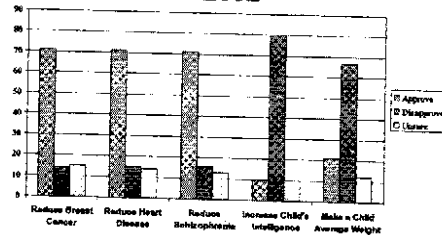
Moral Acceptability of Human Stem Cell Situations - 2002



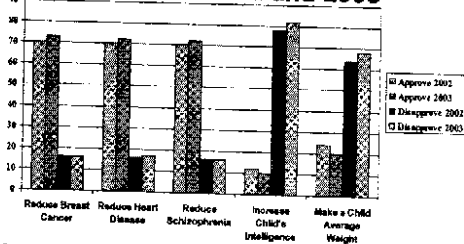
Changes in Moral Acceptability of Human Stem Cell Situations 2002 & 2003



Public Approval to change Human Cells - 2002



Public Approval to change Human Cells - 2002 and 2003



While a majority of the Australian public views the use of gene therapies as worthwhile uses of the technology, to cure diseases such as breast cancer and schizophrenia, there is much less support for making a child of more average intelligence or making a person of more average weight. These are seen as 'cosmetic' and 'trivial' uses of the technology.

Research studies have found that high levels of moral endorsement are given by the Australian community towards using human stem cells derived from adult cells (88% support), using gene therapy to help cure genetic diseases (84% support) or correct genetic disorders (79% support). Majority public opinion support is also given to genetic testing of unborn children (61% support) and using human stem cells derived from embryos (59% support). On all of these issues public opinion support has increased strongly since 2002. However, only limited public support is given to the idea of human reproductive cloning (6%).