

Perspectives on the Ethics of Egg Donation

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The Question of Money

- | NAS guidelines allow women to undergo hormonal induction to provide eggs solely for human stem cell research.
- | What financial considerations, if any, should be allowed?

Categories of Payment

I Reimbursement

I Compensation

I Incentives

Categories of Payment

I Reimbursement

I Compensation

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Why Allow Compensation?

- | Healthy research volunteers are typically compensated for their time, effort, and inconvenience.
 - NIH Clinical Center.
 - IRB Guidebook, DHHS.
- | Women must devote up to **40 cumulative hours** to provide their eggs for research.

Why Allow Compensation?

- I If (a) it is ethically acceptable for women to undergo hormonal induction to provide eggs for stem cell research, and (b) if it is ethically acceptable to compensate healthy research volunteers for their time, effort, and inconvenience in all other areas of basic science research, then (c) there is a **presumptive reason** to compensate women for the time, effort, and inconvenience of providing eggs for basic stem cell research.

Compensation Should be the Ethical Default Position

- I The burden of justification lies with those who wish to deny women compensation for their time, effort, and inconvenience.

Concerns About Compensation

- | Compensation may undermine the **voluntary nature** of women's choices to undergo hormonal induction for stem cell research – i.e. compensation would act as an **undue inducement**.
- | Is there no way to guard against this possibility?

Concerns About Compensation

- I Compensation may disproportionately entice **socio-economically disadvantaged** women to provide their eggs for stem cell research.
- I Is this outcome inevitable?

Concerns About Compensation

- | Compensation is wrong because it introduces an element of **commodification**.
- | Does this objection actually justify a categorical ban on compensation?

Concerns About Compensation

- | Some believe women should provide their eggs purely from the motive of **altruism**.
- | Is it appropriate to demand that women provide their eggs for research purposes out of pure altruism?

Summary

- | None of these objections supports a categorical ban on compensating women who provide eggs for stem cell research.
- | **Reimbursement** of direct expenses.
- | **Compensation** for time, effort, and inconvenience.

Conclusion: ESCRO Oversight

- I The key issue is not whether to compensate egg providers; rather, it is how best to determine compensation levels and how to monitor researchers' recruitment and informed consent procedures.

Thank You

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