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List of Publications and Papers Presented

Journal Article:

The final publication is available at link.springer.com
ISI-WoS cited publication, Scopus-cited, PubMed cited, and Google Scholar

ISI-WoS-cited publication, Scopus-cited, Google Scholar and Chemical Abstracts

Proceedings:


Abstracts:


Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Ethical Views of Buddhist, Hindu and Catholic Leaders in Malaysia

Mathana Amaris Fiona Sivaraman¹ · Siti Nurani Mohd Noor¹

Received: 10 January 2015 / Accepted: 2 June 2015 © Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht 2015

Abstract Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) raises ethical issues. In the process of research, embryos may be destroyed and, to some, such an act entails the ‘killing of human life’. Past studies have sought the views of scientists and the general public on the ethics of ESCR. This study, however, explores multi-faith ethical viewpoints, in particular, those of Buddhists, Hindus and Catholics in Malaysia, on ESCR. Responses were gathered via semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. Three main ethical quandaries emerged from the data: (1) sanctity of life, (2) do no harm, and (3) ‘intention’ of the research. Concerns regarding the sanctity of life are directed at particular research protocols which interfere with religious notions of human ensonment and early consciousness. The principle of ‘do no harm’ which is closely related to ahimsa prohibits all acts of violence. Responses obtained indicate that respondents either discourage research that inflicts harm on living entities or allow ESCR with reservations. ‘Intention’ of the research seems to be an interesting and viable rationale that would permit ESCR for the Buddhists and Hindus. Research that is intended for the purpose of alleviating human suffering is seen as being ethical. This study also notes that Catholics oppose ESCR on the basis of the inviolability of human life.

Keywords Do no harm · Embryo · Ethics · Intention · Sanctity of life · Stem cell research

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Brief communication (Original)

Ethics of embryonic stem cell research according to Buddhist, Hindu, Catholic, and Islamic religions: perspective from Malaysia

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Background: The use of embryos in embryonic stem cell research (ESCR) has elicited ethical controversies as it entails the destruction of 5-day old human embryos to harvest stem cells.

Objective: To explore the ethical positions of Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Catholicism concerning the use of (1) left-over embryos from in vitro fertilization (IVF) also known as ‘surplus’ embryos and (2) ‘research embryos’ which are created by scientists to conduct research using embryonic stem cells.

Methods: The opinions of religious leaders of Buddhist, Hindu, and Catholic faiths in Malaysia pertaining to ESCR were examined via in-depth, semi-structured interviews while Islamic responses are collected from local writings related to the derivation of fera on this issue. Participants’ responses on the ethics of human stem cell research are presented as a reflection of various scriptural texts of these four religions. These are presented and supported with the help of international bioethics literature and focus on the use of ‘surplus’ embryos and ‘research’ embryos.

Results: Islamic ethics deviate from Hindu and Buddhist teachings regarding saving of research embryos that have been created specifically for research and are considered as human lives only after 120 days fertilization. Hindu and Buddhists also underscore the sanctity of human life, but give priority to the alleviation of suffering in living adult humans. They generally encourage ESCR. Research is a knowledge-seeking endeavor considered noble by Islam. This is also a concept within Hindu and Buddhist philosophy; in particular, when potentially beneficial research goals are the basis. Catholicism also emphasizes sanctity of human life, but stresses also the inviolability of embryos from the moment of conception.

Conclusion: Embryonic stem cell research is permissible and encouraged according to Hindu and Buddhist perspectives in view of the potential benefits of such research to society, with some reservations. This is similar to Islamic views on the ethics of ESCR. However, Catholicism differs from all the other three religions; it appears to discourage research in this field because of the likely violation of a sacred principle in Catholic teachings.

Keywords: Bioethics, embryo, ethics, religion, sanctity of life, stem cell research

Embryonic stem cells are derived from blastocysts (4–5 days postfertilization) [1]. Their pluripotent nature, which is their ability to differentiate into all cell derivatives of the human body and generate into various cell types, makes them useful in research that has widespread implications on biology and regenerative medicine. Stem cell research has been particularly mentioned as potentially useful for treatment of Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis, myocardial infarction [2], Alzheimer’s disease, spinal cord injury, cancer, and juvenile-onset diabetes [3].

In Malaysia, scientists currently use human adult stem cells. However, in anticipation of ethical issues, should scientists advance into human embryonic stem cell research, the 2009 Guidelines for Stem Cell Research and Therapy were prepared. Included within the guidelines is the Islamic ethico-religious position for the use of human Embryonic Stem (hES) cells in research [4]. Accordingly, research on human embryonic stem cells is allowed, but limited to the use of surplus embryos, such as embryos leftover from infertility treatments. The creation of human embryos solely for research has been prohibited by means including assisted
SESSION 7: MEDICAL ETHICS OF EARLY LIFE & END OF LIFE

Use of surplus embryos in embryonic stem cell research: Nothing unethical is happening

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Abstract - Among the sources of human embryonic stem cells (hESC) are (i) surplus embryos left from IVF trials and (ii) embryos created via IVF solely for research purposes. Research on hESC is in progress in Malaysia using source (i). Ethical controversies arise due to the need to extract stem cells from a 4-5 day old embryo that is subsequently destroyed whether from source (i) or (ii). Some writers have argued that it is ‘respectful’ to use surplus embryos for research rather than discard them. This paper gathers perspectives from selected religious groups and scholars that generally indicate that research to alleviate suffering is encouraged rather than discouraged. It is concluded that nothing unethical is happening when viewed from the standpoint of the real intention of research i.e. to promote happiness for the greatest number. This seems to override all ethical presuppositions related to the destruction of surplus embryos.

Keywords: stem cell, ethics, religion, surplus embryo, moral status

I. INTRODUCTION

The discovery of human Embryonic Stem Cell, hESC by Wisconsin team in 1998 (Thomson et al., 1998) holds many promises in the medical frontier, especially in the regenerative medicine. Thomson explains the science behind embryology. After fertilization, the zygote divides several times and the cells of this cleavage-stage are undifferentiated forming a compact ball of cells known as morula consisting of 32-128 cells (Thomson, 2001). Then, the cells continue to proliferate to form a blastocyst (Fischbach & Fischbach, 2004). The first differentiation occurs around five days of development at blastocyst stage consisting of an outer layer of cells (trophoblast) separating from the Inner Cell Mass (ICM). It is important to note that ICM forms prior to implantation (Fischbach & Fischbach, 2004). It is only when these ICM cells are isolated from its embryonic environment and cultured under laboratory conditions, ICM-derived cells can proliferate and self-renew to form any cell type (Thomson, 2001). These ICM-derived cells are the one that we refer to as Embryonic Stem (ES) cells and pluripotent in nature (Thomson, 2001).

Embryonic stem cells are preferred over adult stem cells due to their pluripotency. These cells can differentiate into any cell types in the human body other than the extraembryonic tissue required for formation of placenta, and therefore they cannot form a whole human being (Fischbach & Fischbach, 2004).

Among the sources of human embryonic stem cells (hESC) are (i) surplus embryos left from In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF) trials and (ii) embryos created via IVF solely for research purposes (NBIAC, 1999). The stem cells are extracted from a 4-5 day old embryo (Thomson, et al., 1998). This subsequently leads to the destruction of embryos whether from source (i) or (ii). This raises ethical controversies.

Embryonic stem cells are said to provide promising cures to treat debilitating diseases such as Parkinson’s disease, multiple sclerosis and myocardial infarction (McLaren, 2001). In addition to that, embryonic stem cells can be used to treat other serious health conditions such as Alzheimer, spinal cord injury, cancer, and juvenile-onset diabetes (Braverman et al., 2009).

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1 Blastocyst is an early stage of embryo prior to its implantation into the wall of uterus, made up of about 150 cells.
Abstract:

1)

TRACK 15: SPECIAL PUBLIC HEALTH INTEREST (PUBLIC HEALTH LAW, DISASTER RESPONSE, VIOLENCE ETC.)

Date: 18 October 2014 (Saturday)
Time: 1500 – 1630
Venue: Sentral Exchange B

O15_01
PUBLIC HEALTH ETHICS FOR PLURAL SOCIETIES: THE CASE OF HUMAN EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH

Mathana Amaris Fiona Sivaraman, Siti Nurani Mohd Nor
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Introduction: This research explores the ethical perspectives of embryonic stem cell research (ESCR) in Malaysia. Among the sources of human embryonic stem (hES) cells are (i) ‘surplus’ embryos left from in vitro fertilisation (IVF) trials and (ii) ‘research’ embryos intentionally created via IVF solely for research purposes. Most of the work thus far includes propagation, expansion and derivation of hES cell lines using source (i). Ethical controversies arise due to the need to extract stem cells from a 4-5 day old embryo that is subsequently destroyed whether from source (i) or (ii). The morality of ESCR vary considerably according to religious interpretations on moral status of human embryo.

Methods: The ethical standpoints of the 11 religious leaders, which includes, 4 Buddhist monks and leaders, 4 Hindu leaders and 3 Catholic priests pertaining to ESCR are examined via in-depth, semi-structured interviews. Islamic responses are examined from the local and international writings.

Results: For the Buddhists and Hindus, the intention of research and the need to alleviate suffering are the motivating factors in ethical discussions. In general, all Buddhists leaders approve ESCR except one who disapproves the use of research embryos. All Hindu leaders cautiously support the use of surplus embryos, but oppose the use of research embryos. For the Muslims, the decision has been forwarded in the form of Islamic ruling (fatwa) in 2005, which allows research on surplus embryos for therapeutic purposes and saving lives. On the contrary, the Catholics do not permit any form of ESCR and strictly observe the inviolability of embryonic life.

Conclusion: Commercial stem cell treatment centres are fast progressing. In a multi-religious and multi-cultural country like Malaysia, religious resources are sought for ethical guidelines. It is recommended that the results of this research be discussed in inter-faith public forums to create awareness of the principles behind each faith which either prohibits or permits ESCR. Improving health condition of people through therapeutic researches without compromising the respect for life, need to be addressed.

Keywords: ethical perspectives, embryonic life, intention of research, religious resources, stem cell research
Abstract

that emerged from my study is the use of language in interactions with patients. Patients I interviewed generally avoided the word “cancer” and had strong views on the language of communication between the doctor and patient. The other element if disclosure was the knowledge of the disease labeled medical jargon in my study. The appeared to be an absence of any medical information of choices, such as whether breast can be conserved, the prognostic finding in the reports or even the choice to have chemotherapy or surgery first. In contemporary bioethics this information/disclosure is considered a fundamental right of the patient. So the question arises as to what needs to be disclosed? Other areas that appeared as themes were religion, privacy, confidentiality and the role of the family. Interestingly my study has led me to believe that the implementation of bioethical principles cannot be a text book affair that may be read and learnt. But contextualization of the norms of a culture, religion and society is a major stake holder for ethical practice.

Postmenopausal pregnancies - some ethical issues
Subir Biswas (Dr) & Gargi Saha (Dr)
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A woman’s reproductive age, once a dictate of nature, now has been challenged and artificially extended by using donated oocytes fertilized in vitro and transferred to their uterus. Postmenopausal pregnancies have been and will remain controversial as there are overlapping interests of national, religious, medical, legal, social, cultural as well as ethical views. Medical, psychological, and ethical factors weigh heavily in the decision to have a child of postmenopausal women. Again the perspectives are of different in nature-from prospective mother’s side as well as to be born child’s rights. Postmenopausal pregnancies also widen the scope of reproductive options and challenge conventional ideas and theories about motherhood, pregnancy, childbirth, parenting as well as evolutionary perspective. Present paper intends to explore such issues and discuss accordingly to understand ethical and other issues behind postmenopausal pregnancies.

Use of surplus embryos in embryonic stem cell research: Nothing unethical is happening
Mathana Amaris Fiona a/p Sivaraman & Siti Nurani Mohd Noor (Dr)
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Among the sources of human embryonic stem cells (hESCs) are (i) surplus embryos left by IVF trials and (ii) embryos created via IVF solely for research purposes. Ethical controversies arise due to the need to extract stem cells from a 4-5 day old embryo that is subsequently destroyed whether from source (i) or (ii). Like many countries, research on hESCs is also in progress in Malaysia. A medical centre in Malaysia recently announced the birth of its 3000th IVF baby, and a success rate of 62.1% of the total IVF trials performed in the year 2011 alone. Couples from the program who do not wish to freeze surplus embryos are given the option to either discard or donate them for hESCs research. Some writers have argued that it is ‘respectful’ to use surplus embryos for research rather than discard them. Biologically, the moral concern of harming the embryo does not arise as a 5-day old embryo is not a sentient being due to the absence of the primitive streak. Furthermore, embryos in a petri dish do not possess moral status for the fact that they do not reside within the womb, the natural nurturing environment of ‘human’ embryos. Subsequently, it would be morally obligatory that such embryos are used optimally for research. The US National Bioethics Advisory Commission (1999) permits research on surplus embryos with the intention to find cures for diseases. Research aimed at improving health is also viewed as a noble act according to some religions. According to the Malaysian Fatwa (2005), research on surplus embryos is permissible with consent from parents. To conclude, we believe that nothing unethical is happening here and the intention to promote happiness for the greatest number overrides all ethical presuppositions related to the destruction of surplus embryos.

Experiences and expectations on the process of delivering bad news from nasopharyngeal cancer patients
Diyah Woro Dewi Lestari & Amalia Muhasilin (Dr)
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Delivering bad news is a crucial part of communication in terminal illness. Informing cancer diagnosis to patients has been regarded as “delivering bad news”; although treatment for many types of cancer in early stadiaums have been established, including nasopharyngeal cancer (NPC). The aim of this study is to explore patients’ experiences in receiving the diagnosis of their illness for the first time, information about the treatment, and prognosis of their illness. This study also wishes to explore patients’ expectations on the process of delivering bad news, including which persons should be involved in the process of delivering and receiving the information. Nasopharyngeal cancer patients aged 17-56 years who were undergoing treatment were interviewed in the hospital using a semi-structured questionnaire. Patients with impaired hearing and speech were excluded. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for qualitative analysis. A number of themes related to the process of delivering bad news were identified. Results show that different terms for “nasopharyngeal cancer” were used by doctors to inform the diagnosis. A number of patients did not receive clear information beforehand about the diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis of their illness. However, a number of patients prefer that doctors deliver the information first to their family, not to themselves as the patient.
Abstract

3)

14th Asian Bioethics Conference

41. USE OF SURPLUS EMBRYOS IN EMBRYONIC STEM CELL RESEARCH:
THE STANDPOINTS OF THE BUDDHISTS, HINDUS AND CATHOLICS IN
MALAYSIA

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Abstract:

The use of left over embryos from IVF treatments also known as ‘surplus’ embryos, in
embryonic stem cell research (ESCR) has elicited ethical controversies as it entails the
destruction of human embryos to harvest stem cells. The notion of human dignity was also
widely underscored in many ‘Western’ bioethical discourses. However, in a multi-religious
and multi-cultural country like Malaysia, ethical discussions pertaining to the morality of
ESCR has taken a different outlook given the diverse views within and among the religious
traditions. This paper presents the results of a study on ethical perspectives of religious
leaders of Buddhist, Hindu and Catholic traditions pertaining to the use of surplus embryos in
ESCR. Findings from in-depth interviews show that a scientist’s research intentions presents
an important motivating factor in ethical discussions in Buddhism and Hinduism much like
Muslim ethical deliberations in ESCR. For the Muslims, the decision on the use of surplus
embryos in ESCR has been forwarded in the form of Islamic ruling (fatwa) in February 2005.
Accordingly, research on surplus embryos for therapeutic purposes is allowed with consent
from parents. On the contrary and quite similar to past studies in Christian ethics which
focuses on the moral status of the human embryo, the Catholics do not permit any form of
ESCR; the principle of the sanctity of human life is strictly observed.

Keywords: ethics, surplus embryo, stem cells, research, religion
Title - Surplus Embryos for Stem Cell Research: To donate or not to donate?
APPENDIX A

2009 Malaysian Guidelines on Stem Cell Research and Therapy

Full account of the guidelines available at:

A part of the guidelines is shown below.
*Refer to statement no. 9 and 10 in the guidelines about surplus and research embryos.

1. The Ministry of Health will undertake to encourage and promote stem cell research in Malaysia.

2. All stem cell research and applications must be reviewed by the respective Institutional Review Board (IRB) and/or the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) for approval to ensure ethical research and use of stem cells. The IRB and IEC must strictly adhere to the National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research and Therapy.

3. A copy of all research proposals must be submitted to the National Stem Cell Research and Ethics Sub-Committee which shall retain the rights to review any research proposal as and when required.

4. All experiments and clinical trials involving stem cells must be based on a solid foundation of basic scientific and animal experimentation and carried out with the highest medical and ethical standards.

5. Research on human adult stem cells is allowed.

6. Research on stem cells derived from foetal tissues from legally performed termination of pregnancy is allowed.

7. Research on non-human stem cells is allowed.

8. Use of embryonic stem cell lines for research purposes is allowed.

*9. Research on embryonic stem cells derived from surplus embryos is allowed. (Please refer to the Keputusan Muzakarah Jawatankuasa Fatwa Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Malaysia berkaitan Pengklonan dan ART dated 22 February 2005)

*10. The creation of human embryos by any means including but not limited to assisted reproductive technology (ART) or somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT) specifically for the purpose of scientific research is prohibited.
APPENDIX B

National fatwa on stem cell research.


“The 67th Muzakarah (Conference) of the Fatwa Committee of the National Council for Islamic Religious Affairs Malaysia held on 22nd February 2005 has discussed the ruling on therapeutic cloning and stem cell research. The Committee has decided that:

2. Using frozen embryo or extra embryo in vitro fertilisation process is permissible for research purpose. However, permission must be granted from the married couple who are under treatment. The research on the embryo must be done before the embryo reach the calaqa stage (blastocyst).”
APPENDIX C

Newspaper article about 3,000 IVF births in a private medical centre in Malaysia

New Straits Times article on July 8th, 2012 about 3,000 successful IVF births in a private medical centre in Malaysia. The centre alone has performed over 6,000 IVF procedures. (This makes one ponder about the fate of surplus embryos from IVF trials).
APPENDIX D

Informed Consent forms signed by respondents

INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Mathana Amaris Fiona

Date: 28/6/2012

Time: 11.30 a.m. - 12.30 noon

Venue: Archdiocese Pastoral Institute, JLN Pudu

Research Title: Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Ethical and Religious Perspectives of Non-Muslim Groups in Malaysia

Research Aim:

The purpose of this study is to explore the ethical considerations pertaining to Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) in Malaysia specifically from cultural and religious perspectives. The study will investigate the stands made by the local non-Muslim religious scholars (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism) and will also examine the fundamental arguments that arise from those religions in regards to ESCR in Malaysia.

Herewith, the interviewee agrees to share his/her comments with the above named interviewer pertaining to the mentioned research topic. The interviewee may choose to remain anonymous in this study. The interview will be audio recorded. The collected comments will be analysed and documented to give a complete picture about the various religious perspectives pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia. The results from the interview will be kept confidential and strictly used for the thesis write-up only.

Name of interviewee: REV. FR. CLARENCE DEVADASS

Signature of interviewee: [Signature]
INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Mathana Amaris Fiona
Date: 16/5/2013
Time: 11.00 - 12.00 noon
Venue: YBAM Office, Taman Mayang

Research Title: Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Ethical and Religious Perspectives of Non-Muslim Groups in Malaysia

Research Aim:

The purpose of this study is to explore the ethical considerations pertaining to Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) in Malaysia specifically from cultural and religious perspectives. The study will investigate the stands made by the local non-Muslim religious scholars (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism) and will also examine the fundamental arguments that arise from those religions in regards to ESCR in Malaysia.

Hereby, the interviewee agrees to share his/her comments with the above named interviewer pertaining to the mentioned research topic. The interviewee may chose to remain anonymous in this study. The interview will be audio recorded. The collected comments will be analysed and documented to give a complete picture about the various religious perspectives pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia. The results from the interview will be kept confidential and strictly used for the thesis write-up only.

Name of interviewee: [Signature]
Signature of interviewee: [Signature]
INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Mathana Amaris Fiona

Date: 17/5/2013

Time: 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Venue: SENTUL MEDICAL CENTRE

Research Title: Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Ethical and Religious Perspectives of Non-Muslim Groups in Malaysia

Research Aim:

The purpose of this study is to explore the ethical considerations pertaining to Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) in Malaysia specifically from cultural and religious perspectives. The study will investigate the stands made by the local non-Muslim religious scholars (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism) and will also examine the fundamental arguments that arise from those religions in regards to ESCR in Malaysia.

Hereby, the interviewee agrees to share his/her comments with the above named interviewer pertaining to the mentioned research topic. The interviewee may chose to remain anonymous in this study. The interview will be audio recorded. The collected comments will be analysed and documented to give a complete picture about the various religious perspectives pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia. The results from the interview will be kept confidential and strictly used for the thesis write-up only.

Name of interviewee: Dr. M. Bala Thirmalingam

Signature of interviewee: [Signature]

17/5/12
INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Mathana Amaris Fiona
Date: 7/6/2012
Time: 11:15 - 12:30 pm
Venue: St. Francis Xavier Church - Parish Office

Research Title: Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Ethical and Religious Perspectives of Non-Muslim Groups in Malaysia

Research Aim:

The purpose of this study is to explore the ethical considerations pertaining to Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) in Malaysia specifically from cultural and religious perspectives. The study will investigate the stands made by the local non-Muslim religious scholars (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism) and will also examine the fundamental arguments that arise from those religions in regards to ESCR in Malaysia.

Hereby, the interviewee agrees to share his/her comments with the above named interviewer pertaining to the mentioned research topic. The interviewee may chose to remain anonymous in this study. The interview will be audio recorded. The collected comments will be analysed and documented to give a complete picture about the various religious perspectives pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia. The results from the interview will be kept confidential and strictly used for the thesis write-up only.

Name of interviewee: FR ALBERT TAN, SJ
Signature of interviewee: 

Fr Albert Tan, SJ
Parish Priest
Church of St Francis Xavier
INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Mathana Amaris Fiona

Date: .................................

Time: 3:00 - 4:30 p.m.

Venue: BUDDHIST MAHAVIHARA TEMPLE OFFICE

Research Title: Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Ethical and Religious Perspectives of Non-Muslim Groups in Malaysia

Research Aim:

The purpose of this study is to explore the ethical considerations pertaining to Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) in Malaysia specifically from cultural and religious perspectives. The study will investigate the stands made by the local non-Muslim religious scholars (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism) and will also examine the fundamental arguments that arise from those religions in regards to ESCR in Malaysia.

Hereby, the interviewee agrees to share his/her comments with the above named interviewer pertaining to the mentioned research topic. The interviewee may chose to remain anonymous in this study. The interview will be audio recorded. The collected comments will be analysed and documented to give a complete picture about the various religious perspectives pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia. The results from the interview will be kept confidential and strictly used for the thesis write-up only.

Name of interviewee: Venerable Bodhicitta

Signature of interviewee: .................................
INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Mathana Amaris Fiona
Date: 4/7/2012
Time: 3:00 - 5:30 p.m.
Venue: Hospital Kajang (Depok UPM, Klinik Psikomet)

Research Title: Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Ethical and Religious Perspectives of Non-Muslim Groups in Malaysia

Research Aim:

The purpose of this study is to explore the ethical considerations pertaining to Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) in Malaysia specifically from cultural and religious perspectives. The study will investigate the stands made by the local non-Muslim religious scholars (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism) and will also examine the fundamental arguments that arise from those religions in regards to ESCR in Malaysia.

Hereby, the interviewee agrees to share his/her comments with the above named interviewer pertaining to the mentioned research topic. The interviewee may chose to remain anonymous in this study. The interview will be audio recorded. The collected comments will be analysed and documented to give a complete picture about the various religious perspectives pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia. The results from the interview will be kept confidential and strictly used for the thesis write-up only.

Name of interviewee: [Signature]
Signature of interviewee: [Signature]
INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Mathana Amaris Fiona
Date: 23/7/2012
Time: 3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Venue: 26th floor, KPKE, PUTRAJAYA.

Research Title: Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Ethical and Religious Perspectives of Non-Muslim Groups in Malaysia

Research Aim:

The purpose of this study is to explore the ethical considerations pertaining to Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) in Malaysia specifically from cultural and religious perspectives. The study will investigate the stands made by the local non-Muslim religious scholars (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism) and will also examine the fundamental arguments that arise from those religions in regards to ESCR in Malaysia.

Hereby, the interviewee agrees to share his/her comments with the above named interviewer pertaining to the mentioned research topic. The interviewee may chose to remain anonymous in this study. The interview will be audio recorded. The collected comments will be analysed and documented to give a complete picture about the various religious perspectives pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia. The results from the interview will be kept confidential and strictly used for the thesis write-up only.

Name of interviewee: Balakrishnan Kandasamy
Signature of interviewee: ____________________________
INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Mathana Amaris Fiona

Date: 21/9/2013

Time: 10:45 - 11:55

Venue: INDIAN STUDIES LIBRARY

Research Title: Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Ethical and Religious Perspectives of Non-Muslim Groups in Malaysia

Research Aim:

The purpose of this study is to explore the ethical considerations pertaining to Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) in Malaysia specifically from cultural and religious perspectives. The study will investigate the stands made by the local non-Muslim religious scholars (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism) and will also examine the fundamental arguments that arise from those religions in regards to ESCR in Malaysia.

Hereby, the interviewee agrees to share his/her comments with the above named interviewer pertaining to the mentioned research topic. The interviewee may chose to remain anonymous in this study. The interview will be audio recorded. The collected comments will be analysed and documented to give a complete picture about the various religious perspectives pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia. The results from the interview will be kept confidential and strictly used for the thesis write-up only.

Name of interviewee: K. THILAGAWATHI (DR)

Signature of interviewee: [Signature]
INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Mathana Amaris Fiona
Date: 8 November 2012
Time: 1030 - 1245 noon
Venue: Kopitiam, Fl. 15, Kompuny Tunku, 47301, KL.

Research Title: Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Ethical and Religious Perspectives of Non-Muslim Groups in Malaysia

Research Aim:

The purpose of this study is to explore the ethical considerations pertaining to Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) in Malaysia specifically from cultural and religious perspectives. The study will investigate the stands made by the local non-Muslim religious scholars (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism) and will also examine the fundamental arguments that arise from those religions in regards to ESCR in Malaysia.

Hereby, the interviewee agrees to share his/her comments with the above named interviewer pertaining to the mentioned research topic. The interviewee may chose to remain anonymous in this study. The interview will be audio recorded. The collected comments will be analysed and documented to give a complete picture about the various religious perspectives pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia. The results from the interview will be kept confidential and strictly used for the thesis write-up only.

Name of interviewee: Datuk Dr. Veithilingam

Signature of interviewee: ________________________________
INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Mathana Amaris Fiona

Date: 28/11/2012 9/6/2013

Time: 1. evening e-mail correspondence 2. 3-4 p.m.

Venue: via e-mail, from MAADI Centre, Johor

LaSalle Provincial House, PJ.

Research Title: Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Ethical and Religious Perspectives of Non-Muslim Groups in Malaysia

Research Aim:

The purpose of this study is to explore the ethical considerations pertaining to Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) in Malaysia specifically from cultural and religious perspectives. The study will investigate the stands made by the local non-Muslim religious scholars (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism) and will also examine the fundamental arguments that arise from those religions in regards to ESCR in Malaysia.

Hereby, the interviewee agrees to share his/her comments with the above named interviewer pertaining to the mentioned research topic. The interviewee may chose to remain anonymous in this study. The interview will be audio recorded. The collected comments will be analysed and documented to give a complete picture about the various religious perspectives pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia. The results from the interview will be kept confidential and strictly used only for the thesis write-up.

Name of interviewee: Fr. Dr. Michael Teng

Signature of interviewee: __________________________
INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEW

Interviewer: Mathana Amaris Fiona
Date: 14/12/12
Time: 10:30 am - 12:00 noon, 1:30 - 9:00 pm
Venue: 1. Katedral Sangat Buddhist Temple
2. Hilltop Buddhist Temple, Taman Tan Yew Lai

Research Title: Embryonic Stem Cell Research: Ethical and Religious Perspectives of Non-Muslim Groups in Malaysia

Research Aim:

The purpose of this study is to explore the ethical considerations pertaining to Embryonic Stem Cell Research (ESCR) in Malaysia specifically from cultural and religious perspectives. The study will investigate the stands made by the local non-Muslim religious scholars (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Catholicism) and will also examine the fundamental arguments that arise from those religions in regards to ESCR in Malaysia.

Hereby, the interviewee agrees to share his/her comments with the above named interviewer pertaining to the mentioned research topic. The interviewee may chose to remain anonymous in this study. The interview will be audio recorded. The collected comments will be analysed and documented to give a complete picture about the various religious perspectives pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia. The results from the interview will be kept confidential and strictly used for the thesis write-up only.

Name of interviewee: B. SARANAYA

Signature of interviewee: [Signature]
APPENDIX E

Interview Guide

An interview guide only serves as a general guideline in semi-structured interviews. During the interviews, the questions put forward to the respondents may not be in the same order as listed below. Other important questions may arise during the course of the interview.

I Sanctity of life:
1) In your religion, what are the religious guidelines and rules that can be used as reference point when dealing with ethics of ESCR in Malaysia?
2) What are the religious sources that you abide by in the decision-making process pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia? (Any verses from the scriptures?)
3) What do the religious scriptures say in regard to sanctity of life, specificity to embryo research? Is destroying embryo for research regarded as ‘killing’ in your religion? (When life begins?)
4) Does your religion prohibit or permit embryo research (or allow with certain restriction) – What is the basis for permissibility?
5) With reference to your religious scriptures,
   (a) Are the embryos regarded as having moral status?
   (b) Are the embryos in the laboratory (which are not in natural environment) regarded as having potential for life?
   (c) In reference to your religion, are surplus embryos left from IVF trials regarded as having moral status?
6) Scientifically, a 5-day old embryo is unable to sense pain until the formation of neural precursor takes place around 14 days of fertilisation. With regard to that, can embryos be used for research? How does your religion view this? (Does pain or body function play a criterion in defining human person?)
7) Is there any clear indication in the religious scriptures about ensoulment and its significance to embryonic research?

II Research is a knowledge-seeking endeavour
8) Does your religion view ESCR as a duty for scientific advancement and progress for mankind?
9) Some religions see embryo research as ‘public good’ or on the notion for ‘better good’, that is to find treatment for debilitating diseases like Parkinson, Alzheimer, diabetes and many more. How does your religion regard the use of embryos in research that is said to hold promise in regenerative medicine? (taking into consideration the immense benefits to mankind and nation; and on the flip side, critics say that we are compromising on the notion of public good)
10) Abundance of surplus embryos left from IVF trials would be discarded if not used for research. How does your religion interpret the use of surplus embryos in research? (Is it considered lesser evil?)
11) Some say killing is killing no matter what good reasons may be given. How does your religion view this? (Also, is it considered disrupting nature?)

12) What is your religion’s view regarding the option to create embryos in the laboratory solely for research purpose?

III General consensus in Malaysian context

On the whole:

13) 
   (a) What is your respond about the value systems of other religions towards ESCR in Malaysia?
   (b) Do you see the value systems of other religions in Malaysia contributing towards advancement in ESCR?

14) If religious scholars from various backgrounds were to come for a discussion, do you think it can lead towards a consensus pertaining to ESCR in Malaysia? (Do we need to come to a consensus?)

15) Representing the religious community, what is your take on ESCR in Malaysia?

16) Did you play any role or judgment pertaining to decisions in fields related to ESCR, locally or internationally? Anything related? Any books or writings on this?

17) ESCR is still in its beginning stage in Malaysia. Should it progress further in Malaysia or start looking for alternatives?

18) Representing the religious community, what is your recommendation for ESCR in Malaysia?