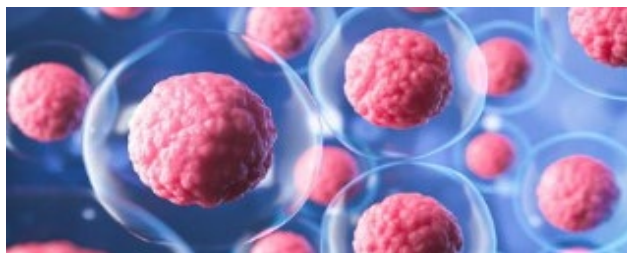


## OPEN SYMPOSIUM

# *The moral status of stem cell-derived embryo models*

**Time:** 15/09/2023, 09:30 - 13:00

**Location:** Hátíðarsalur, Aðalbygging



The Nordic Committee on Bioethics has invited some of the most prominent researchers from the Nordics and beyond, with expertise in stem cells- and embryonic research, ethics and law. They will share their research and their reflections in a mini symposium on September 15, 2023. The symposium is in collaboration with the Graduate program in molecular life sciences, BioMedical Center (BMC) at the University of Iceland. The symposium is open to the public.

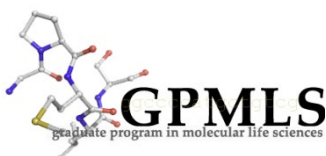
### **Background:**

Currently, the 14-day rule in science policy and regulation, limits research on human embryos (outside the uterus) to the first 14 days of gestation. This is referred to as the 14-day rule. This means, that week 3-4 of human embryonic development is something of a “black box” because scientists cannot see what is taking place in the uterus during the early stages of gestation beyond the first two weeks. In recent years, progress has been made in early embryo research beyond the first two weeks, via “human embryo models,” developed from stem cells, and the study of mouse embryos. Making further use of these discoveries would, however, require researchers to go beyond the 14-day rule when culturing human embryos and embryo models. This raises various ethical issues, not the least concerning the ethical and legal status of such “embryo models” and it re-actualises the debate on a potential extension of the 14-day rule.

Various ethical dilemmas emerge, which forces us to think about moral principles such as the duty to prevent suffering and the duty to respect the value of human life. Where is the balance concerning the benefits these embryo models provide vs. ethical concerns? What is the legal and ethical status of human-embryo-like structures now and in the future – should it be the same for embryo models as for human embryos? What are the financial interests and how should they be regulated? Why should we want to go beyond the 14-day rule? What are the particular questions that arise from a Nordic point of view with regards to the moral status of a human embryo model and culturing human embryos beyond the 14 days?

### **Speakers**

- Dr. Jakub Hanna, Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel
- Fredrik Lanner, Assistant Professor at Department for Clinical Science, Intervention and Technology, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden
- Johanna-Ahola Launonen, Post-Doctoral Researcher at Aalto University, Helsinki, Finland
- Garðar Árnason, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Akureyri, Iceland
- Arnar Pálsson (moderator), Professor in Bioinformatics at the University of Iceland



The symposium will also be live-streamed. Please visit our [website](#) (Scan the QR code with your phone)

