

Fetal stem cells may soon see breakthrough in Parkinson's research

The University of Nebraska Medical Center has been among the leading recipients of federal grants for research projects that involve fetal tissue research — exploration that UNMC officials say could soon produce a groundbreaking treatment for Parkinson's disease.

The controversy in Washington over Planned Parenthood has again sparked debate over the use of tissue from aborted fetuses for medical research, research that has been used for decades to develop vaccines and medical treatments. The Associated Press reported that some \$280 million in federally funded research from 2011 to 2014 involved fetal tissue.

UNMC officials say the figures cited in the AP data can be misleading. Only a small portion of the research funded by the competitive federal grants actually uses fetal cells. But UNMC officials said the research has without doubt advanced medicine.

"Research involving fetal cells has led to tremendous advancements in developing treatments for a range of diseases, including Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, AIDS dementia and others," said Tom O'Connor, a UNMC spokesman. "That's why many of the nation's leading research institutions, including the University of Nebraska, are responsibly engaged in this type of research."

Much of the work at UNMC has been directed by Dr. Howard Gendelman, who for nearly two decades has led UNMC research into neurodegenerative disorders such as Parkinson's and neuro-infectious diseases like HIV-related dementia.

Gendelman is involved in what UNMC officials called a "groundbreaking human clinical research trial" that could provide a novel treatment for Parkinson's.

"The idea that led to this research began 16 years ago with fetal cells in a test tube," O'Connor said.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [UNMC officials say fetal tissue research could soon produce groundbreaking Parkinson's treatment](#)