

Can we trust self-regulation? As artificial embryos creep closer to the real thing, when do we hit pause?

[R]esearchers at the University of Michigan [are reporting](#) that they've learned to efficiently manufacture realistic models of human embryos from stem cells. They think the advance will let them test fertility drugs and study the earliest phases of pregnancy, but it is also raising novel legal and ethical issues.

The artificial embryos were made by coaxing stem cells to spontaneously form tiny ball-shaped structures that include the beginnings of an amniotic sac and the inner cells of the embryo (the part that would become a person's limbs, head, and the rest of their body) though they lack tissues needed to make a placenta.

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However, as similar research races forward in Europe and China it is raising questions about how close scientists really are to synthetically creating viable human embryos in their labs.

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[Researcher Jianping] Fu says only someone "crazy" would try to make a person using a synthetic embryo. However, given the rapid advance of the science, he sees a legal ban as important. "Many scientists are trying to push boundaries, and people are crossing lines. If you let scientists self-regulate, that is how the gene-edited babies happened. I don't trust self-regulation," says Fu.

Read full, original post: [Meet the "artificial embryos" being called uncanny and spectacular](#)