

Preface

Motivation for this book came from two very different things: frustration and a desire for reciprocity. Frustration, because it is difficult to find teaching materials on research ethics that are both specific enough to be useful to regenerative medicine researchers and yet robust enough to be applicable to a broader audience of those who deal with similar issues in scientific practice, particularly those related to the use of human and animal cells in research. Frustration also comes from the narrow way in which ethical and social issues in regenerative medicine have been defined. The subject of much of ethical and policy writing about regenerative medicine, while important, is often both disproportionate and out of sync with what researchers, clinicians, patients, and others face in the lab, the classroom, the boardroom, in exchanges within scientific communities, or in everyday decisions about health care. Readers are accustomed to the debates that have dominated stem cell research to date, filtered through historical and political lenses, but there are emerging issues in the way regenerative medicine is being practiced and organized that go begging for analysis and discussion. On the horizon are surprising changes in our ability to manipulate biology and disruptions to the way we have organized and funded the production of knowledge, all of which need careful consideration. But there are also gray areas and “unknown unknowns” that come up in routine practice and need guideposts for good judgment. This book thus has dual aims: to bring attention to a few salient emerging issues, as well as to provide fundamental information that will be useful for both experienced readers and those new to the field. In addition, I hope that readers will see that social, ethical, policy, and technological issues are mutually constitutive. That is, governance structures, conventions for sequestering or sharing knowledge, research priorities and financing, new scientific theories, and technical tools are all informed by history, politics, and culture and all are involved in the dynamic processes involved in producing knowledge.

Then there’s reciprocity. Much of my research and teaching has been grounded in work previously supported by the National Science Foundation and the Greenwall Foundation. I am deeply appreciative for the opportunities this funding provided. It has also been my privilege to work with, learn from, and teach many researchers

working in regenerative medicine. I am grateful to the many stem cell and tissue engineers, biologists, materials scientists, regulatory officers, and others who have not only patiently endured my many questions over the years but also engaged with me in thinking through the many challenges and paradoxes inherent in regenerative medicine research. This book is for you, and for all of the researchers, policy-makers, program managers, and students who must navigate constantly changing environments. I would also like to thank research assistants Jessica Von Reyn and Catherine Turng, who made this challenging book manageable, as well as the many students who have made the journey so rewarding.

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Regenerative Medicine Ethics
Governing Research and Knowledge Practices
Hogle, L.F. (Ed.)
2014, VIII, 227 p. 2 illus. in color.,
ISBN: 978-1-4614-9062-3