



## WISCONSIN CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

Office of Science Policy  
National Institutes of Health  
6705 Rockledge Drive, Suite 750  
Bethesda, MD 20892

September 2, 2016

Dear Sir or Madam,

On behalf of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference (WCC), the public policy voice for the Catholic bishops of Wisconsin, I write to voice the strongest possible opposition to the National Institutes of Health's (NIH's) decision to lift its moratorium on taxpayer funding of research involving human-animal chimeras.

Our first and foremost objection is grounded in the principle of human dignity, which affirms that every human being is created in the image and likeness of God and thereby has an inalienable right to life. This right prohibits the use or manipulation of human life by others, regardless of the motivation behind such action.

Science tells us that from the time an embryo is formed a new life has begun – a unique being with a unique genetic code. We cannot deny nor corrupt that humanity. At a time when our world continues to fight the harmful effects of ecological degradation, we must also seek to protect our human ecology at every stage of development. Using embryos as “research tools” in the creation of chimeras literally dehumanizes us as beings. The U.S. Government should not support the further destruction and manipulation of human embryos, nor engage in activities that do not respect and care for creation.

Second, chimera research could create animals with human brains and human gametes. This would not only blur the lines between human beings and animals, it would also create confusion about what our moral obligations are towards these hybrid creatures. Are we prepared for the possibility that scientists could be experimenting on beings that are more human than animal? Today we are appalled by research that was conducted on Americans with cognitive disabilities in the earlier part of the twentieth century. We must not risk repeating the mistake of using unethical practices in search of advancement.

Finally, it is deeply troubling that in its rush to rescind the moratorium, the NIH appears to have discounted the ethical concerns of the scientific community and the general public. Providing only one month for comments and no other public discussion of the ethical issues at stake is inexcusable. When the stakes are so high, American citizens deserve much better from the nation's leading biomedical research center.

For all these reasons, please retain the current moratorium on research involving human-animal chimeras. Taxpayers should not be forced to subsidize research that destroys and denigrates human life.

Sincerely,

  
Kim Wadas  
Executive Director