

Monika and Her Liver

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I've been having a great time since leaving school. I've got my own money and so much more freedom! Like everyone else I go out most nights. I only drink heavily on Fridays and Saturdays – well, you do if you go out clubbing– and those nights I get totally drunk, but other times I'll only have three or four drinks. You've got to have fun somehow, haven't you? On the big nights out I've been in a couple of fights, but nothing too serious. I can't actually remember that much! Yes, I'm drinking more than I should do for my health, but my family has this great medical insurance plan, so if I do mess up my liver then I can get a new one when I need it – so no worries there. My cousin Jenny, who's a bit older than me, had the stem cell treatment last year, and she's back drinking again. 'Stem cells are a drinker's best friend,' she tells me.

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Johan

The whole point of science and medical research is to improve the way we lead our lives and give us freedom of choice. I think it's fantastic that treatments like this allow us to live the way that we want to live.

Carla

One of the most important things about growing up is making mistakes – it's how we learn. This sort of treatment gives us a second chance if some of the mistakes we've made are going to affect us in our later lives.

Christian

Monika is irresponsible – she's damaging her own health and causing problems for others. It's not right that she should be able to have a treatment to fix a problem that's her own fault, especially if she's just going to carry on drinking afterwards. Doctors' time would be better spent treating more deserving people.

Hanna

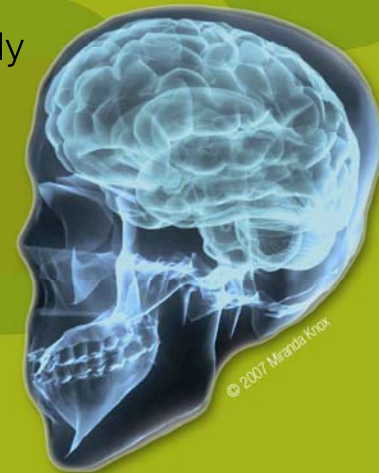
Doesn't she know that it's not just her liver that is damaged by excessive drinking? Her memory is clearly being affected – and she should have her heart checked out. It won't be long before she needs much more than her liver replaced.

Peter and His Memory

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Peter has never had a great memory and doesn't do well in exams. He and his parents are absolutely determined that he becomes a doctor, like his father and grandmother. Brain scans have shown that the part of Peter's brain that stores memories is not working very well. Doctors have suggested that his memory might be improved by stem cell treatment. It's a new treatment that is not yet licensed in the UK but available at a private clinic in California. Although the treatment is expensive Peter's family have lots of money, and are happy to spend it on something they feel is so worthwhile. Peter is making the trip next week; he's nervous but very excited. It should make a big difference not just to his school results but to his entire future.

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Maria

Science has always tried to make the world a better place. This kind of treatment is just a start to improving the whole human race, so that we all become smarter.

Natalia

It is not fair that Peter can have a better memory just because his parents can afford it. He's being given an unfair advantage - he'll do better at school, university and later in life anyway - because of his parents' bank balance. My family couldn't afford to do that. Isn't he privileged enough already?

Stefan

There must be a reason why the treatment isn't licensed yet in the UK, it's only 'suggested' that it 'might' work. And what if something goes wrong? His family's selfish decision could mean that Peter spends the rest of his life using the resources of the Health Service.

Ben

Peter has the right to make the most of his life, and it takes courage to have that kind of brain surgery. If his memory is improved he can become a doctor and save other people's lives. How can that be wrong?

Emma and Her Embryos

“ Emma: Nils, there's something we need to talk about. I had a chat with a researcher at the clinic. Did you know having IVF* treatment means more embryos are created than are needed?

Nils: Yeah, we were told that was part of the process.

Emma: Well, she asked if we would give our consent for these extra embryos to be donated for medical research. She said it could lead to life saving therapies, but I'm not so sure.

Nils: Well, they're only a bunch of cells really, aren't they? If these cells end up helping thousands of people, surely that's a good thing.

Emma: But it doesn't feel like that to me! Each of those embryos could be one of our children. It's bad enough that they have to die, without being experimented on first.

Nils: But they're not our children, are they? They're not really alive.

Emma: Who says they are not alive? I don't want to consent this.

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*In Vitro Fertilisation



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Joel

These spare embryos are alive, whether they look like a bunch of cells or not, they can grow into a human being. Using these embryos for research is unnatural.

Jenni

Emma is having IVF; a treatment developed through research that she now doesn't want to support, even though she is benefiting from it. I think she has missed a great opportunity to do something that could be of enormous importance to another person in need.

Toni

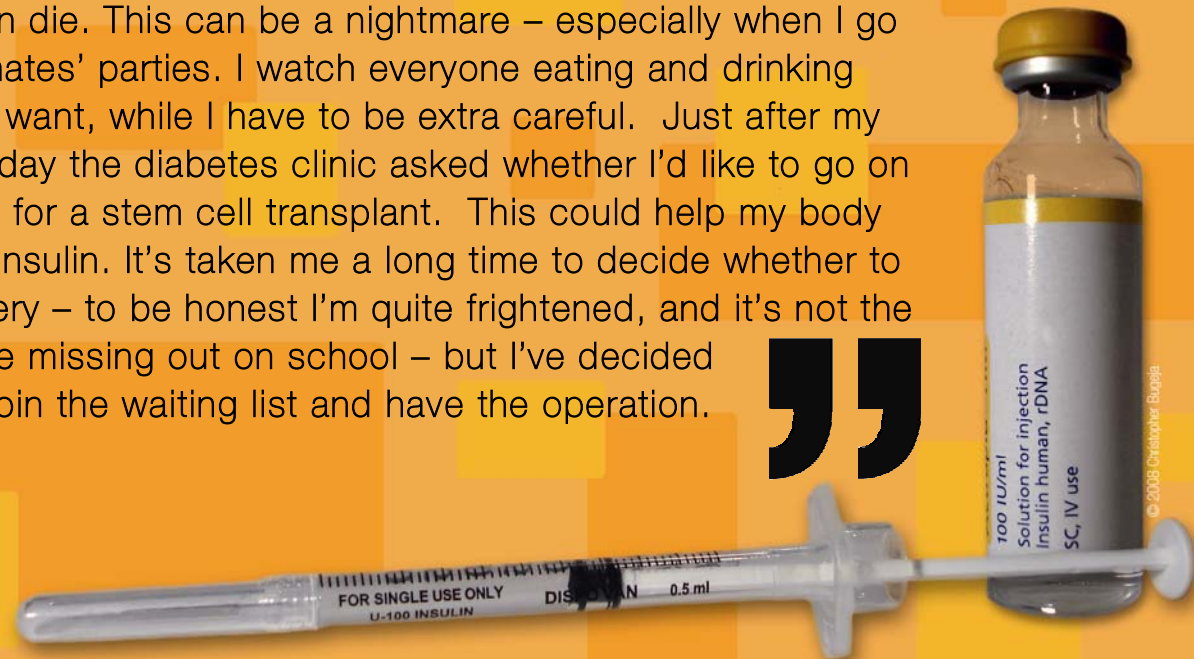
Emma has every right to decide on the fate of her own embryos and I can understand why she doesn't like the idea of her baby's cells ending up under the microscope or in a complete stranger.

Laila

We all have a duty to help others if we can. The spare embryos are going to die anyway, so why not use them to save lives. What if people stopped donating blood because they didn't like the idea of it ending up in someone else's heart?

Tom and His Diabetes

“ I am a diabetic, which means I have to give myself insulin injections three times a day. You wouldn't believe how much this affects my life– I have to watch what I eat and drink, and carry my insulin around with me everywhere. If I don't, I could have a seizure or even die. This can be a nightmare – especially when I go round to my mates' parties. I watch everyone eating and drinking whatever they want, while I have to be extra careful. Just after my sixteenth birthday the diabetes clinic asked whether I'd like to go on the waiting list for a stem cell transplant. This could help my body make its own insulin. It's taken me a long time to decide whether to have the surgery – to be honest I'm quite frightened, and it's not the best time to be missing out on school – but I've decided in the end to join the waiting list and have the operation. ”



Emma

This operation sounds great, although it might be expensive, it results in a huge long term saving for the Health Services.

Olli

There is a perfectly good treatment already available, which people have used for years. Why invest so much time and money in developing a new one - surely it would be better spent in finding treatments for conditions that we can't deal with yet.

Laura

What if the transplant doesn't work? Tom might have to have the operation again, or worse there could be unexpected side effects. What if the transplant becomes cancerous? Or, it might not work at all, and then Tom would be back to injecting insulin. There's always a danger with new treatments.

Matias

Tom has made the right decision. It's much better to have a complete cure rather than endless injections. The quality of his life will be greatly improved.