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ADVANCING STEM CELL RESEARCH AND THERAPY IN MALAYSIA: WHAT ARE THE ETHICAL AND LEGAL CHALLENGES?

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SUMMARY

Write a short summary up to **300 words** in a **single paragraph**. Abstract content should be structured to describe in the following order: Introduction, Materials and methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion.

Since its inception, the potential of human stem cell research and therapy has long been perceived as a major breakthrough in the area of medical technologies across the globe. Realising its potential, many countries have heavily invested in developing this technology such as China, India, and Singapore. These countries have emerged as the “rising powers” in this area joining the advanced countries such as the UK, USA, and Japan. Malaysia also has similar aspiration and stem cell technology is recognised as one of the important areas of emerging technologies that could facilitate scientific discoveries in addressing national public health issues. Notwithstanding its potential, there is a myriad of complex ethical and legal issues arising from the development of this technology. Given the complexity, different countries have adopted different regulatory strategies to ensure ethical progress that is appropriate to the local context resulting in a regulatory patchwork at the global level. An empirical study was conducted through qualitative interviews in Malaysia demonstrates that local stem cell researchers are facing ethical and legal challenges in advancing this promising technology of the 21st century. This research provides valuable information to show that there are concerns among key stakeholders that the current regulatory framework adopted by Malaysia does not seem to facilitate ethical development as well as protecting the general public. Therefore, it is crucial for Malaysia to address these challenges and in so doing, it could be useful for Malaysia to learn from other experienced countries particularly the UK.