



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **STS Symposium Explores International Applications of Stem Cell Research for Cardiothoracic Surgery**

From presidential candidates to religious leaders, everyone seems to be weighing in on the controversial subject of stem cell research within the United States. Because the topic is of particular interest and has practical applications for cardiothoracic surgeons, the STS 44<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting will feature an International Symposium, “Cardiac Applications of Stem Cell Research Today and Tomorrow—International Perspectives” to be held January 28 in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

“Stem cell treatments are probably the way of the future; there has been an explosion of centers working on stem cell research and applications throughout the world,” said Dr. Aurelio Chaux, Chair-Elect of the STS Workforce on International Relations. “The topic is very new and of extreme interest to everyone.”

The program will include three presentations: the potential role of stem cells in the treatment of myocardial infarction and heart failure; cardiac engineering and stem cells; and how international multi-center stem cell research programs are planned and organized. These three sessions will be followed by a panel discussion.

Because stem cell research and clinical therapeutic application are controversial topics within the United States, Dr. Chaux thinks that attendees at the Symposium can learn a great deal.

“We are now exploring the possibility of producing stem cells lines that do not involve killing an embryo,” he said. “There is recent research suggesting the possibility that persons in need of stem cell therapy could be able to develop their own cell lines. This would potentially solve some important ethical issues but it could also raise new issues, such as cloning and all its implications.”

While basic research in the United States is going very well, lessons learned in the lab are not being applied to human beings here as they are in other countries, according to Dr. Chaux. Eventually this is expected to change.

“Stem cells have the potential to greatly improve the treatment of some patients and this is an area we need to be involved with right at the beginning,” he said.

For more information about this debate or ethical issues facing the specialty, contact Sharon Porta, STS Manager of Marketing and Communications, at [sporta@sts.org](mailto:sporta@sts.org) or (312) 202-5844.

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*The Society of Thoracic Surgeons is a not-for-profit organization representing more than 5,400 surgeons, researchers, and allied health professionals worldwide who are dedicated to ensuring the best possible heart, lung, esophageal and other surgical procedures for the chest. Founded in 1964, the mission of STS is to enhance the ability of cardiothoracic surgeons to provide the highest quality patient care through education, research and advocacy. The STS Annual Meeting is the premier education event in cardiothoracic surgery.*