

Stem cell specialists face questioning

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A top panel of experts will face questions of public and scientific concern on stem cell research during an international conference being held at The University of Manchester this week.

The Stem Cell Question Time will be headed by Lord Naren Patel, chair of the UK National Stem Cell Network, as part of Stem Cell Manchester, a three-day gathering of stem cell researchers from across the globe.

Among the panellists at Wednesday's event will be Ron McKay from the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, USA, Justine Burley, from the University of Singapore, and Jed Davies, from the University of Toronto, Canada.

The audience, which will be comprised of scientists both within and outside the field, will be invited to submit questions on important, contentious and challenging issues facing the stem cell research community.

Such topics up for discussion are likely to focus on the ethical issues surrounding stem cell research as well as the scientific challenges that must be overcome if this cutting-edge branch of biomedical research is to fulfil its true potential.

Also on the panel are Alan Coleman, from Embryonic Stem Cell International, Singapore, Chris Mason, from University College, London, and Daniel Brison, Co-director of the Northwest Embryonic

Stem Cell Research Centre based at St Mary's Hospital and The University of Manchester.

“The Stem Cell Manchester conference has attracted leading figures in stem cell research from across the world,” said organiser Professor Tim Hardingham, who is based in Manchester's Faculty of Life Sciences.

“We have a packed programme of speakers lined up over the next few days culminating with the Question Time event on Wednesday where people outside the field can take part in a full and frank debate of the issues surrounding stem cell research.”

Among the speakers at the conference is Shinya Yamanaka, whose team at Kyoto University in Japan is pioneering ways of producing stem cells from adult human cells and therefore avoiding the need for embryos.

Source: University of Manchester

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