

Frozen human embryos are not life forms, S.Korean court says

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South Korea's Constitutional Court has ruled that human embryos left over from fertility treatment are not life forms and can be used for research or destroyed, a court spokesman said Friday.

In its ruling Thursday the court upheld an existing law allowing the use of leftover embryos for research. The law also allows fertility clinics to dispose of frozen embryos five years after fertilisation treatment is completed.

"The ruling means that [human embryos](#) that are in their early stage and are not implanted into a mother's womb cannot be seen as human life forms," the spokesman, Noh Hui-Beom, told AFP.

The ruling came after a group of 13 people including pro-life activists filed a petition with the court against the current [bioethics](#) law, which allows the use of leftover embryos for research.

Following the ruling, shares related to stem-cell research surged on the local market.

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