



MEDIA RELEASE

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Australia Opens Its Doors to Dangerous Research

The decision by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) to lift the current moratorium on animal to human transplants has been labelled as reckless and irresponsible by Humane Research Australia Inc.

Chief Executive Officer, Helen Marston, said today *"It is disappointing that our government is putting our society at risk, despite warnings from transplant specialists, including Sydney cardiologist and former president of the International Society for Heart and Lung Transplantation, Anne Keogh, and Infectious Diseases Physician & Microbiologist, Prof Peter Collingnon."*

"The 5 year moratorium on animal to human transplants announced in 2004 was made with good reason. 'Xenotransplantation' is a risky process whereby retroviruses which may lie dormant in its host species can jump across the species barrier and result in 'zoonotic' diseases similar to (or potentially worse than) SARS, Mad Cow Disease and Swine Flu. "

"The recent global panic over Swine flu could perhaps serve as a (very modest) precursor of how the world might react should a new zoonotic disease emerge from xenotransplantation. While the outbreak of the H1N1 virus was declared by the World Health Organisation to be a "public health emergency of international concern", a more virulent strain might easily have a much higher level of transmissability and more serious health consequences."

"An individual has the right to expose themselves to any risks involved in scientific research but to further expose that risk to the wider community, who have NOT given consent, is highly unethical."

"The number of individuals that could suffer and die from a new epidemic could greatly exceed those potential lives which xenotransplantation was supposed to have saved in the first place. " concluded Ms Marston.

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