

Stem Cells

An Exploratory Front-End
Investigation

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CONCEPT MAPS

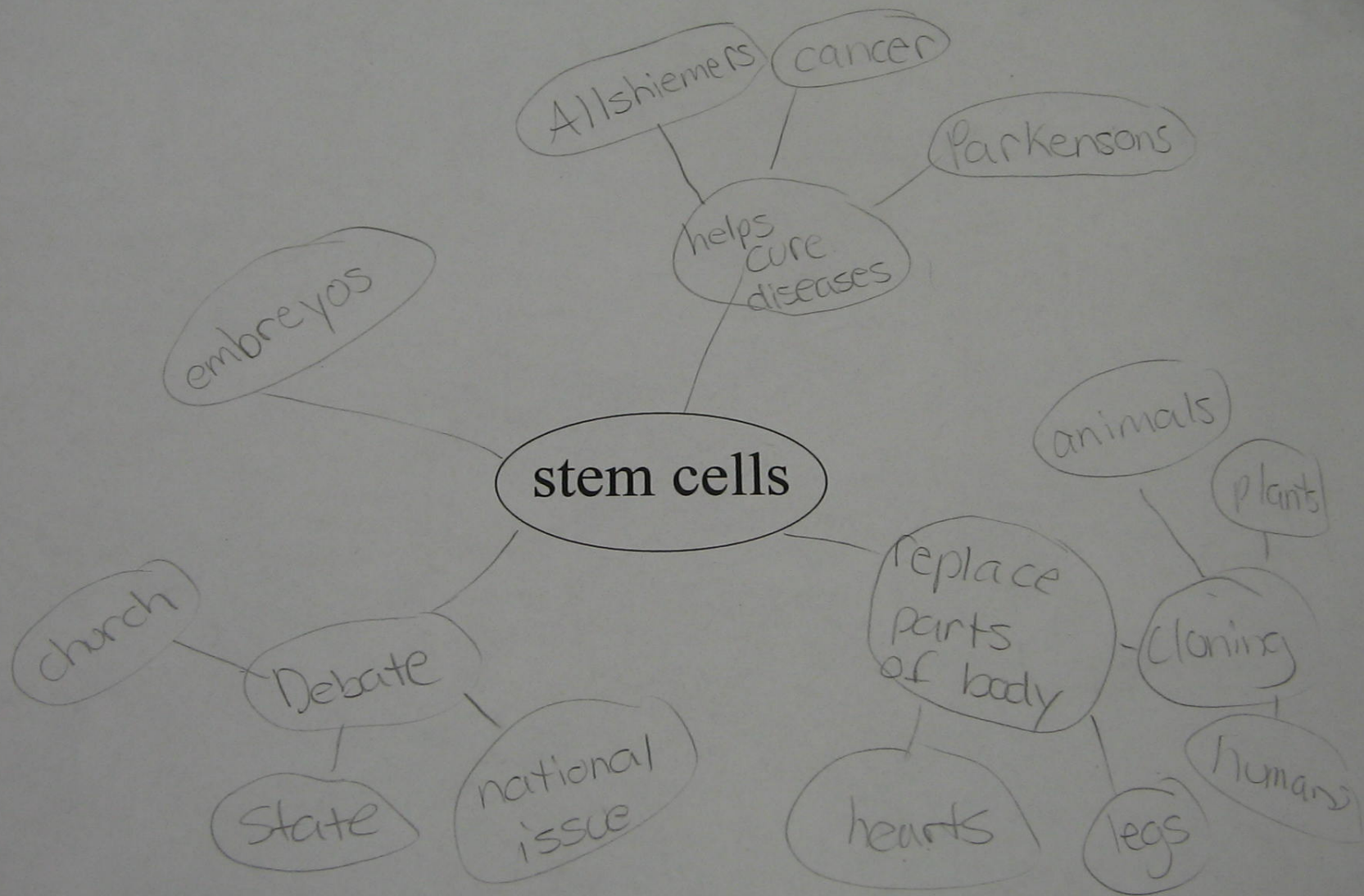
Work to illustrate domains of public understanding and interest in stem cells

Information Generated:

Ideas associated with Stem Cells

Questions about Stem Cells

Suggestions for Exhibits



But concept maps missed fundamental fact that most respondents did not know what stem cells were!!

This information revealed in interviews paired with concept map activity

Interviews also enable collection of types of data info not generated by concept map

Ideas Associated with Stem Cells

- Embryos/Fertilized Eggs
 - Usage/destruction
- Medical Uses
 - Cure for Diseases
 - Replacement of organs/cloning
- Moral/Ethical Debate
- Blank Slates

Knowledge of Stem Cells

- In only 2 of 10 interviews were participants able to provide any definition of what a stem cell was.
- Widely held knowledge was largely confined to potential uses of stem cells

Questions

- What stem cells are

- What specifically are stem cells?*
- Where are they located?*
- Do animals have stem cells?*
- How does it apply to childbirth?*

- Research directions

- How are they used?*
- What can be done with them?*
- How are they obtained?*

- Social benefits and costs

- How much can they improve our lives/health?*
- Why are they so controversial?*
- How does stem cell research help the human race?*
- Does it help cure disease?*
- Quality of life vs. longevity*
- Pros/Cons*
- Costs involved*

Exhibition Suggestions

- have real/live cells
- things you can feel
- interactive things
- show how the cell works, how it functions
- show the process of how they get cells
- timeline of research to date
- examples of “success stories”
- show possibilities and potential outcomes
- information on pros + cons of stem cell research and use

Science vs. Moral Controversy

- When averaged interest close to equal
 - Science = 7.6 (on scale of 1-10)
 - Moral = 7.4
- Significant split in interviewees' interest in the degree they would like exhibit to focus on science vs. moral controversy
 - Average discrepancy between scores= 3.0
 - 7 prefer science over moral
 - 9 prefer moral over science
 - 2 express equal interest