

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada,
Langevin Block,
Ottawa ON K1A 0A2

May 21, 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to thank you for the federal government's ongoing efforts to prevent transmission of COVID-19, especially among the most vulnerable Canadians. We endorse the earliest possible development of safe, effective anti-viral vaccines and the broadest uptake of vaccination.

We urge your government to fund the development of vaccines that do not create an ethical dilemma for many Canadians. On one hand, the wide uptake of vaccines is essential to protect citizens from the transmission of disease. On the other, a vaccine produced using abortion-derived cell lines raises conscience concerns for anyone who might be offered that vaccine and is aware of its lineage. This dilemma will emerge if there are no alternatives to vaccines developed with the use of human fetal cell lines obtained from elective abortions.

COVID-19 vaccine candidates that are ethically unacceptable are produced using human cell lines such as PER.C6 and HEK 293, derived from elective abortions.^{1,2} Our ethical objections relate to the use of this abortion-derived lineage, both the destruction and the exploitation of unique human lives.³ The subsequent manufacture of vaccines using such ethically-tainted human cell lines demonstrates profound disrespect for the dignity of the human person.

Governments must ensure that COVID-19 vaccines that become available do not create an ethical dilemma for Canadians. Fortunately, numerous vaccines under development do not raise ethical concerns. One excellent Canadian example is being developed at the University of British Columbia by Dr. Wilfred Jefferies. His methodology uses self-amplifying mRNA, made entirely in a test tube without cells or tissues, according to email dated May 11, 2020 from David Prentice, PhD, of the Charlotte Lozier Institute (DPrentice@lozierinstitute.org). The reference list follows the signatures on this letter.

Please be assured of our strong support for ethically developed vaccines.

c.c.: The Honourable Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health

Yours sincerely,

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References

1. Charlotte Lozier Institute [Internet]. Arlington VA: Lozier Institute; May 2020. An ethics assessment of COVID-19 vaccine programs; 2020 May [cited 2020 May 9]; Available from: <https://lozierinstitute.org/an-ethics-assessment-of-covid-19-vaccine-programs>
2. Coronavirus Today [Internet]. Houston TX: Precision Vaccinations; 2020. Janssen partners with BARDA to expedite COVID-10 vaccine development [cited 2020 May 4]. Available from: <https://www.coronavirustoday.com/barda-will-contribute-janssen-covid-19-vaccine-development-program>
3. Anscombe Bioethics Centre [Internet]. Oxford: Anscombe Bioethics Centre; 2020. COVID-19 vaccines and use of foetal cell-lines; 2020 April 27 [cited 2020 May 4]. Available from: <http://www.bioethics.org.uk/images/user/covidbriefing2.pdf>