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CLONING: A DILEMMA PRACTICED BUT NOT SOLVED

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On 27 February 1997, the scientific community was taken by surprise to read in the prestigious scientific journal *Nature*, a Letter to the Editor entitled "Viable offspring derived from fetal and adult mammalian cells" by Wilmut et al from Rosalin Institute, Scotland, United Kingdom[1]. In this paper the first cloning of a mammal was described, shown on the front page of the same journal and subsequently appeared to the eyes of international media. The mammal was a sheep known internationally as "Dolly". Since then mice, rats, goats, mules, monkeys, calves, cows, pigs, horses, rabbits, and gaur have been successfully cloned, thus making human cloning an eminent possibility[2]. But this possibility also generated worldwide interest in cloning technology particularly aspects related to scientific, potential use, ethical, religious, risks, and social implications.

The concept of cloning is not new and has been under experimentation using frogs and plant embryos since the 1970s. But, the reproductive biology of these species is different from those of mammals. As such, there was no international debate regarding the current dilemma which led to the creation of Dolly.

The aim of this study is to review the scientific basis and types of cloning and to examine the arguments and perspectives related to this subject particularly those related to religious, ethical, social, political and commercial issues.

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