

GLASGOW HERALD

195 Albion Street, Glasgow G1 1QP

ABC CIRC. 122,931 MORNING

ISSUE
DATE

26 JAN 1990

Embryo research opposed

A MAJORITY of people in Britain oppose the use of the human embryo for experiments, according to a Gallup poll survey published today.

However, the survey, conducted on behalf of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, found that in a number of questions there was a marked difference in the attitude of men and women.

For instance, 51% of women said they considered human life begins at conception, whereas only 38% of men took that view.

Mrs Ann Winterton, Conservative MP for Congleton, told a Westminster news conference at which the survey results were announced: "Pro-life scientists and campaigners have successfully exploded

the myth that human embryo research will find cures for genetic disease.

"The purpose of such research is to seek out and destroy handicapped embryos.

"We have exploded the fallacy that human embryo research is intended to relieve infertility. Far from it. Such research is designed to allow the development of new contraceptive and abortifacient drugs, particularly for use in the Third World.

"The people of this country, as this poll shows, are prepared, overwhelmingly, to reject the use of the human embryo for research purposes."

The survey showed that 57% of respondents considered human embryos should not be used to de-

velop new methods of contraception (63% women, 51% men).

A total of 68% thought the human embryo should not be used to develop new techniques of abortion (74% women, 61% men), while 61% were opposed to the use of the human embryo for research in testing drugs (66% women, 55% men).

Fifty eight per cent agreed (56% women, 60% men) with the use of the human embryo for research into genetic and chromosomal disease.

But, in a follow-up question, 49% opposed the practice if the principal aim was not to find a cure or treatment but to find an afflicted embryo so it could be discarded. Only 32% supported this work, with 19% "don't knows".

Meanwhile, 73% (76%

women, 71% men) were against embryo research where the required findings could be obtained by other means.

Miss Alison Davis, a spina bifida sufferer and organiser of the SPUC handicap division, said: "The results show that a majority of people in this country — especially women — feel that handicapped people are worth more than being identified and then destroyed.

"To my mind there is something sick about wanting to carry out destructive experiments on human embryos to find the most efficient method of destroying even more embryos."

The survey was conducted among a sample of 938 adults in Britain between December 13 and 18 last year.