Ian Wilmut is the Director of the recently established Scottish Centre for Regenerative Medicine at the University of Edinburgh. The Mission of this rapidly expanding Centre is to develop new treatments for human disease through innovative research with stem cells. The Centre will act as a focus within Scotland not only for the research with stem cells, but also the clinical and commercial opportunities that arise from the research.

Ian Wilmut was previously Head of the Department of Gene Function and Development at the Roslin Institute where his group produced Dolly, the first clone from an adult animal and went on to use the new methods to introduce precise genetic change into livestock. The research of Ian’s own group continues to be directed toward new understanding of the biology of gametes and embryos and with exploiting that new knowledge in research, agriculture and medicine.

The method of nuclear transfer developed at Roslin will provide entirely new means of studying inherited human diseases such as Motor Neuron Disease, other neurodegenerative diseases, cardiomyopathy and cancer. Other research is concerned with molecular events at fertilisation which influence both the probability of the embryo being able to develop to term and the health of any offspring over their lifetime. The remodelling of nuclear and chromatin structure are brought about by the activity of unknown factors in the egg. Errors at this early stage may lead to prenatal loss and post-natal disease. Understanding the mechanisms that are established during early development is therefore fundamental to improving human health and reproduction.

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