

LifeCell – Daily News Update

May 15 , 2009

Key Industry News:

Publication	mydigitalfc.com
Headline	Frontier in race to develop pacemaker from stemcells
Gist of the article	<p>City-based leading cardiac care centre, Frontier Lifeline hospital, is competing with some of the leading research institutes across the globe to develop biological pacemaker using stem cells. Research has been on at the hospital's laboratory in Ticel Biotech Park, Chennai, for the past year.</p> <p>"Studies are on to produce a biological pacemaker through stem cells as a better alternative to electronic pacemakers," said Soma Guhathakurtha, director of the hospital and joint managing director of Frontier Tissue Line.</p> <p>Leading research institutes in the world such as Technion-Israel Institute of Science, John Hopkins University and British Heart institute are also conducting studies to treat heart disorders using stem cells, including producing pacemakers from human embryonic cells.</p> <p>Frontier Lifeline has successfully completed 42 cases of cardiac muscle revival using stem cells till now. The hospital is also opening its public stem cell bank this June.</p> <p>The public bank enables anybody to buy stem cells if they get have match in the stored samples. Frontier Lifeline's bank will have an initial capacity to store 3,500 processed stem cell samples. The stem cells will be mainly sourced from umbilical cord blood.</p> <p>The hospital has tied up with two other healthcare institutions in the city, Vijaya Hospital and Integral Coach Factory hospital, that have gynaecology departments. Frontier Lifeline has been sourcing the cord blood samples for their research purposes from these hospitals, she said.</p> <p>The hospital already has a stem cell ethical committee with members from different walks of life. There are judges, advocates, doctors from other hospitals, college professors and priests in the nine-member ethical committee.</p> <p>"The facility, however, will not look at private banking except for individual cases in which storing cord blood cells for family members becomes necessary. Private banking is not a viable option as storing the cells for long years is quite expensive," she said.</p>

Publication	wpbf.com
Headline	Parents Weigh Cord Blood Banking

Gist of the article

Mom's already made some big choices. "I am going to do the epidural, that was a decision," said Denise. She and Jay have also given a lot of thought to another delivery day question: will they store the baby's cord blood? This time around, they've spent more time on it.

"I didn't even do the research and I made a decision on not to do it, based on what I assumed. And I assumed, we're healthy, we don't need it," said Denise.

It's a question posed to almost all expectant parents now. At AssureImmune in Boca Raton the scientists say the answer should be yes.

"Cord blood stem cells save lives and it's imperative that you don't waste a drop," said Dr. Connie Araps. The new facility specializes in cord blood, taken by an obstetrician just moments after birth. The sample is sent by courier to a lab where technicians, like Michael Santa Maria, process it. And the adult stem cells in a newborn's cord blood are stored, for use in a medical emergency.

"Leukemia, the many forms of anemia and blood borne diseases in fact there's a genetic form of osteoporosis that they've been treating for years," said Araps, listing off the disease cord blood is useful against.

The Ballina family of Miami knows all too well about medical emergencies. Kevin Ballina is one of only about 700 people worldwide with Diamond Black Fan Anemia. The blood borne disease meant transfusions and painful injections. His long term prognosis was not great.

"When you're a kid, you have to be out there running and playing and so you have to schedule time for that," said Kevin's mother, Rosemary.

Enter Erin, Kevin's baby sister. Moments after her birth four years ago, her umbilical blood was stored with Cord Blood Registry. A few years later, Kevin got that blood as part of a bone marrow transplant.

"He's on no medications right now, so we're thrilled," said Rosemary.

But stories like Kevin's are exceedingly rare.

So much so Dr. Sarrie Katz explains, the American Academy of Pediatrics does not endorse private cord blood banking.

"A lot of parents are very vulnerable at this time, because it's a time they're planning for their baby's future," said Katz. "And a lot of them are first time parents when they're asking us."

Dr. Katz says some banks' advertising plays on parents' emotions, and the chances stored blood will be used is slim. "The estimates vary, but the best estimate of when you are, how likely you are, to use this is 1 in 2000 or less," said Katz.

Obstetrician David Feld doesn't like the cost, around \$2,000 at birth, and then around \$100 a year to store. "In my 34-year career, there has been maybe one time that it where it could've been used on a patient," said Feld.

Denise Stein has now given birth. "Six pounds, 7 ounces," said Denise proudly. Baby girl Reese now has her cord blood stored.

"I feel good that I'm prepared, God forbid you know something happens," said Jay.

"It's hard to talk about without, you feel like you're going to jinx yourself that something could possibly go wrong," said Denise. "I'm glad that we did

	<p>it. I'm glad that we did it."</p> <p>In the end, Erin Ballina's cord blood was not enough. She had to have surgery to donate her bone marrow to Kevn. But it's a gift this young man fully appreciates.</p> <p>"What are you going to tell her someday?" asked WPBF News 25's Cathleen O'Toole. "I'm going to tell her you saved my life."</p> <p>Both doctors and the pediatrics academy do recommend public cord blood banking. That's where you donate your child's sample to a bank where anyone can use it.</p>
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Publication	newswire.ca
Headline	<u>Public Cord Blood Bank - New partner hospitals stand out</u>
Gist of the article	<p>Thanks to the continued commitment of its seven partner hospitals, the Héma-Québec Public Cord Blood Bank is rapidly expanding. Since early 2009, the three newest members of the network have performed exceptionally well. Their combined registration numbers account for half of the Public Cord Blood Bank's annual registration objective.</p> <p>Hôpital de la Cité-de-la-Santé in Laval, Hôpital Saint-François-d'Assise (CHUQ) and Centre mère-enfant (CHUQ), both located in Quebec City, shined by respectively obtaining 668, 451 and 416 registrations with the Public Cord Blood Bank, for a total of 1,535 registrations between January and April 2009 alone.</p> <p>Expectant mothers planning to give birth at Hôpital de la Cité-de-la-Santé in Laval, Hôpital Saint-François-d'Assise (CHUQ) and Centre mère-enfant (CHUQ) have had the opportunity to register with the Héma-Québec Public Cord Blood Bank for several months now. When they sign up, the attending physician provides expectant mothers with an information kit that includes a health questionnaire and consent form, which are then forwarded to Héma-Québec to complete the registration process.</p> <p>"We salute the participating mothers and the partner hospitals for their commitment to the Public Cord Blood Bank, which is a collective resource. Their spirit of giving will help improve treatments primarily for children with malignant blood diseases, such as leukemia and anemia, and malfunctioning bone marrow. Used occasionally in adults, in many cases, cord blood transplants can save lives," said Dr. Francine Décary, Héma-Québec President and Chief Executive Officer.</p> <p>Long considered biological waste, umbilical cord blood is now recognized as a valuable source of stem cells-cells responsible for producing red and white blood cells and platelets. With the consent of mothers who have registered with the Bank, cord blood is collected from the umbilical cord after the birth of the child, once the cord has been cut. This type of collection poses no danger to either the mother or child.</p>