

Stem Cell Awareness Day

September 25th 2008

*Hosted by Monash Immunology and Stem Cell Laboratories (MISCL),
Monash University*

Robert Blackwood Hall,
Monash University, Clayton

“Stem cells: What are they, what’s all the fuss, and how can they help me?”

Stem cells have generated unprecedented excitement in medical research because of their potential to treat a wide range of the most devastating degenerative and induced diseases including those of the cardiac, nervous (including Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s disease), vascular and respiratory systems, autoimmune diseases (such as multiple sclerosis, type 1 diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and lupus), immunodeficiency states, and cancer. Stem Cell therapies may also be useful to treat a wide range of sporting or other physical injuries, and may assist in the recovery from surgery. Stem cells have both human and veterinary applications. They are also the inspiration for a whole new generation of research scientists, astonishing technical breakthroughs and thriving commercial opportunities.

However, the enthusiasm for Stem Cell Research has been tempered by unrealistic promises and expectations, and significant confusion and controversy in the community, often due to inadequate public education, ethical concerns associated with the use of embryonic stem cells, and the perceived threat of human cloning. These concerns are contrasted with sensationalist stories of “miracle cures,” often in poorly regulated environments but still driving a thriving medical tourism industry, because of the desperate needs of many patients for a better quality of life.

Accordingly we have instigated Stem Cell Awareness Day, to foster a greater understanding of stem cells in the broad community - including patients and their support groups, clinicians, ethicists, researchers, students and commercial interests.

This world first, major event will centre around a Public Forum, at Monash University, on all aspects of stem cells, presented by national and international experts in the field. It will help address questions and concerns including:

- What are stem cells?
- How real is their clinical usage? Are they being used already? If not, when?
- Can they really help - what is hype and what is fact?
- What are the safety, regulatory and ethical issues?
- Should I be banking my baby’s stem cells, and what about mine?
- What are the career opportunities in stem cell research and therapies?
- What are the commercial opportunities?

Above all, Stem Cell Awareness Day will showcase the latest breakthroughs in stem cell research and how these are beginning to be applied in the clinic. It will also highlight the global leadership position of Melbourne's biotechnology and stem cell research institutes.

To facilitate participation, this event is free of charge but as places are limited, please register your attendance on our website (www.stemcellawarenessday.com) or by phone on 03 9905 1344.

For all other enquiries, please contact
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Sincerely,



Professor Richard Boyd
Director
Monash Immunology and Stem Cell Laboratories (MISCL)

Thursday 25th September 2008
Robert Blackwood Hall, Monash University Clayton

Morning Public Forum: Stem Cells – The Overview

10.00am Welcome and Introduction

Professor Richard Larkins AO
Vice-chancellor and President, Monash University

Official opening

The Honorable John Brumby MP
Premier of Victoria, Australia

10.15am Victoria-California “Air Bridge” for Stem Cell Research

Video Link with the Californian Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM)

- *Founder, and Chairman of CIRM - Mr Robert Klein*
- *President of CIRM - Professor Alan Trounson*

Video from patient organization Americans for Cures Foundation

- *Co-Executive Directors, Ms Amy Daly & Ms. Constance McKee*

Panel Discussion – Question and answer session with CIRM and audience

COFFEE BREAK

11.00am Stem Cells – The Current Scene

- What are stem cells?
Professor Peter Rathjen, *The University of Melbourne and Parkville Precinct*
- What are the regulations for stem cells and their uses?
Dr Megan Munsie, *The Australian Stem Cell Centre*
- How are stem cells being used in the clinic?
Dr. Silviu Itescu, *Director and Chief Scientific Advisor, Mesoblast*
Dr. Jeff Szer, *Royal Melbourne Hospital*
- What are the next horizons for stem cells?
Professor Peter Curry, *The Australian Institute for Regenerative Medicine.*
Professor Richard Boyd, *Monash Immunology and Stem Cell Laboratories (MISCL)*

11.50am Stem cell banking – private and public opportunities

Dr. Tony Coulepis
CEO CellSense

Dr Ngaire Elwood
Director, Bone Marrow Donor Institute (BMDI) Cord Blood Bank

Panel Discussion:

Stem cells: Premature treatments or tantalising cures? The need for new treatment strategies vs safety vs ethics.

12.00pm Panellists representing the following categories:

- Patients/Patient Advocates
- Regulatory affairs
- Scientists
- Clinicians
- Health/Insurance
- Sportspeople
- Ethical issues

Lunch, Fundraising BBQ

Scientific Poster Session And Information Booths In Foyer

Afternoon Public Forum: Stem Cells And Their Applications

2.00pm

- Introduction
Professor Edwina Cornish, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research), Monash University
- Stem Cells – The International Scene
Professor Susan Lim, Director Stem Cell Technologies, Singapore.
- Stem Cells and Tissue engineering
Dr. Wayne Morrison, Bernard O'Brien Institute of Microsurgery

A selection of speakers will present on the topics below:

- Stem Cell Types
 - Embryonic Stem Cells
 - Adult stem cells from various sources
 - Induced self stem cells - iPS; Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer (SCNT)
- Pre-clinical and Clinical Applications
 - Cardiac
 - Lung
 - Kidney
 - Spinal injury
 - Immune system –chemotherapy, transplantation, immunodeficiency
 - Autoimmune disease
 - Cancer
 - Abnormal fetal and neonatal development
 - Blood
 - IVF and Disease specific stem cells
 - Delivery stem cell therapies
- Veterinary applications
- Commercial Opportunities

Chaired by **Nick Birrell**, Asia Pacific Centre for Science & Wealth Creation