

StemCyte only active player in India offering public banking facility

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StemCyte India Therapeutics, a unit of StemCyte Inc. - USA, has emerged as the only company in India in stem cell business to offer private banking, public banking and stem cell transplants with Umbilical Cord Blood (UCB) stem cells.

The company started its operations in India in 2010 and has stored more than 1000 public umbilical cord blood units till date. StemCyte has a wide network of collection centres spread across Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The storage and processing centre is based out of its headquarter in Ahmedabad.

Mr. Kenneth J. Giacini, chairman & director of StemCyte Inc. - USA, said, "The success of Stem Cell Technology is not just in banking, but in its therapeutic application as well. StemCyte has released almost 2,000 cord blood units across 235 transplant centres worldwide, including 29 transplants in India. Operating a hybrid model of UCB stem cell banking, StemCyte worldwide has a public inventory of over 35,000 Umbilical Cord Blood Units."

In 2012, global cord blood therapeutics market was estimated as a multibillion dollar business with double digit CAGR projected through 2020. However, the category in India is still at a very nascent stage with only 2 per thousand parents opting to preserve their babies' stem cells at birth, compared with 50 per thousand in the US, and 250 per thousand in Singapore. The Cord blood market in India is estimated at around US\$ 60 million and has great potential for UCB banking due to a high birth rate of 26 million births per year and genetic diversity.

"Despite the increasing number of births, India lags behind world indicators with extremely low public cord blood units and lack of bone marrow donors. There is a need to spread awareness and its importance to increase adoption of stem cell banking. We are committed towards our Indian operations and aim to build 5,000 plus units of public inventory in India and also to open more collection centres across India," added Mr. Giacini.

Mr. Deepak Chhabra, coo, StemCyte India Therapeutics Pvt. Ltd., commented "One of the most important aspects in cord blood transplantation is the number of viable stem cells at time of transfusion. Through our patented 'Plasma Depletion Technology' we can assure that more than 99.95% of collected nucleated cells are restored during processing. This in turn results in higher probability of successful transplants." He further added, "UCB transplant plays a major role in treatment of Thalassemia patients, however as on date, there are only 5000 public units in Indian public inventories collectively and these units are not sufficient to treat more than 1 lakh patients who suffer from Thalassemia and other blood disorders."

Dr. Wise Young, Global Medical Director, StemCyte Inc. - USA, who has been doing extensive work on spinal cord injuries, stroke, diabetes, etc. using umbilical cord blood stem cells, said "Research and clinical studies are increasing at an incredible pace and this will result in the treatment of some of the most devastating diseases. UCB can be used to treat more than 80 types of blood disorders which are approved by Indian Regulatory Board and USFDA. StemCyte Inc. - USA has completed the Phase II of their global clinical trial on spinal cord injury and moving forward, India will be one of the centres."

StemCyte is also exploring the use of UCB Stem Cells in Stroke, HIV, Peripheral and Optic nerve damage treatments.