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City Edition

Could a stem cell bank save your child?

Ely Edition

PARENTS in Cambridge could soon be given the chance to store potentially life-saving stem cells taken from the umbilical cord of their newborn baby.

Huntingdon & St Ives Edition

The Rosie Hospital, at Addenbrooke's, plans to introduce the groundbreaking scheme in the next two years.

Newmarket Edition

Stem cells are the "building blocks" for every type of cell in the body, capable of maturing into any tissue type including pancreas, blood or cells in the nervous system.

Region-wide

Stem cell research is already used to treat leukaemia and could potentially lead to cures for diabetes, cancers, heart and blood diseases, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis and Alzheimer's diseases.

Messageboards

In Depth

If established, the service would be a commercial venture run by the British Stem Cell Registry (BSCR) and would give parents the chance to pay to store the cells in case they are needed to treat illnesses later in their child's life.

Features

Columnists

The BSCR is currently conducting a six to eight month study into the scheme.

Letters

It wants to find out how much parents know about the potential of umbilical stem cells - known as adult stem cells - to treat disease, whether they would like their baby's stem cells to be harvested and stored, and how much they would be prepared to pay for the service.

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Practical trials are also underway to investigate how blood from the umbilical cord can be best taken without interfering with the delivery process.

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Dr Lidia Duncan, managing director of the BSCR, said: "The aim of the study is the development of services and technologies for the provision of transplantation of quality stem cells.

CEN Lifestyle

"It will also evaluate how BSCR Ltd can work alongside an NHS trust in informing parents of the potential benefits of umbilical cord blood stem cell collection and storage."

CEN Marketplace

Stem cells have the potential to develop into different types of tissue and are believed to offer the hope of



Vital stem cell research: Lidia Duncan

In Depth

Health



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Online Poll

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Yes

No

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a cure for many diseases.

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They are used in leukaemia treatment through bone marrow transplants and trials are underway to explore other uses such as the treatment of heart disease.



It is not yet known how much the Addenbrooke's service will cost.

Some private companies already offer cord blood collection to create a store of cells for use later in life and prices vary from hundreds of pounds up to £1,500.

The National Blood Service also takes cord blood from some babies which is stored in the national Cord Blood Bank and used for transplantation in the same way as the Bone Marrow Reister.

Although the use of cord blood stem cells in transplantation is not new, the Rosie trial is believed to be unique in looking to develop a relationship between an NHS foundation hospital and a private company, making stem cell storage available to more parents.

Also see:

-  [Uni expert calls for UK cell bank](#)
-  [Stem cells could be 'miracle cure'](#)



If the trial is a success a commercial service could be launched within two years.

Harvesting stem cells from cord blood is different to the controversial procedure of growing embryos purely for their stem cells.

Dr Duncan said: "Adult stem cell storage for future use in transplantation provides an ethical alternative to the use of embryonic stem cells."

A spokeswoman for Addenbrooke's said the hospital was awaiting the results of the pilot study.

Related links

-  [Centre aims to stem the risk from disease](#)
-  [Unlocking cell secrets](#)

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