

Stem cell therapy is gaining pace in India and has grown into a sizeable commercial value for major players in the industry. However, we observe, as in any health care industry, there are lots of questions unanswered when it comes to clinical applications of stem cells, and as a patient wanting answers, it could prove to be very difficult to get clear answers. AS a watchdog society, Society for Regenerative medicine and Tissue Engineering, we make it our business to take stem cell banking (including cord blood banking) and stem cell therapy to every individual, so that stem cell banking and therapy becomes more acceptable and beneficial to the public.

The recent trend in stem cell therapy has been very erratic, and the major players in the arena mix hope with hype and present a scenario, which proves to be deceptive to the patients. Players from the private sector, like International Stemcell Services Limited (ISSL), have proved that the stem cell therapy is a viable option for certain diseases, where each condition is approached scientifically and treatment options are given to patients without hype. More companies of such sort must find their way into mainstream so that stem cell therapy can be offered to deserving patients and will also become affordable.

Government bodies like the DBT and ICMR are organizing awareness meetings on a common platform, where non scientific individuals are given an opportunity to interface with regulatory authorities, to discuss issues regarding guidelines on stem cell therapy, the do's and don'ts in stem cell therapy etc.. This is a positive step towards regularizing these issues concerning stem cell therapy, as this will enable serious endeavors from the private sector to make promising headway in the domain.

As representatives of a cross section of our society, who are interested in regenerative medicine, we, as a society feel that there

- Must be a definite common ground set between the government, private players and the scientific staff indulging in high end stem cell research.
- Government must first of all make the guidelines and implement them within a reasonable time frame especially in the constitution of the National Apex Committee, (NAC).
- There must be a robust private –public partnership in the stem cell committee so that each sector is properly represented. As implementation is mainly in the domain of private players, this association of paramount importance.

- Government must encourage private players to write clinical grants and must expedite the process in granting their applications. We are receipt to may dissatisfied applicants, who complain that the time taken for review of application is very long and tedious and they are seldom granted. NO letter of clarification is sent and a reason for non approval is also not communicated. TRANSPARENCY is needed from the government bodies.
- Societies, like ours must be made a part of these stem cell committees so that we bring in our dimensions to it.
- Government institutes must extend and write translational research grants with the private sector, to encourage public-private partnership. This facilitates acceleration of ideas and brings them from bench to clinical practice.

India is poised on a multi billion dollar industry in stem cell therapy and the focus of the government authorities must be to encourage private players and cut the red tape as much as possible and practice transparency in matters of granting proposals. Innovative indigenous ideas must be put across as this will encourage our students for better participation in this booming industry.

Government authorities must exercise its power by bringing young and fresh talent in these promising areas of health and science.

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SOCIETY FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE & TISSUE ENGINEERING (SRMTE) is a Non-Profit body registered in the state of Maharashtra, India under the Societies Act 1860. Formed in the year 2003 by a group of scientists working towards Stem Cell Research.