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IRAQ VETERAN WILL BE FIRST TO GET ADULT STEM CELL TREATMENT FOR SPINAL CORD INJURY IN FDA TRIAL

By Clay Dillow Posted 08.05.2010 at 2:41 pm [5 Comments](#)



Studying Stem Cells Dr. Gabriel Lasala and Dr. Jose Minguell examine cells in TCA Cellular Therapy's lab. Business Wire

Last week, the FDA gave biotech firm Geron the green light to proceed with clinical trials of an embryonic stem cell treatment for spinal cord injuries. But while we wait on promising embryonic stem cell research to clear political and regulatory hurdles, adult stem cell research is trucking right along. Yesterday it was announced that Iraq War veteran and Marine Matt Cole, paralyzed from the chest down since a 2005 insurgent attack in Iraq, has enrolled as the first patient in the [first FDA clinical trial](#) of adult stem cells used to treat spinal cord injuries.

The procedure involves removing a couple of thousand adult stem cells from Cole's bone marrow, multiplying them in the lab and injecting them into his spinal cord. That should happen later this month. Nine other patients have also been enrolled for this phase of the trial, which is being undertaken by TCA Cellular Therapy in Covington, La.

Tags

[Science](#), [Clay Dillow](#), [adult stem cells](#), [health](#), [medicine](#), [Nervous System](#), [spinal cord injuries](#), [stem cell therapies](#), [stem cells](#)

Adult stem cell treatments have enjoyed success in treating leukemia, lymphoma, various blood diseases, and cardiovascular ailments (among other things), and researchers expect experimental new spinal cord treatments to repair damaged neurons to the point that at minimum patients regain some motor and sensory function that was lacking before. But the impact of the treatment could be much greater, if not in Cole's case then for future recipients for the treatment.

The ultimate goal, of course, is to find a means to restore nervous function to the 311,000 people living with a spinal cord injury in the U.S. alone. Many of those people suffer from injuries or ailments for which treatment options aren't just limited -- they are virtually non-existent.

[\[Business Wire\]](#)

5 COMMENTS

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Setarip

08/05/10 at 2:59 pm

These are very exciting times! I hope that his treatment will succeed beyond there expectations and open up some viable treatments for these types of ailments.

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mitEj

08/05/10 at 3:21 pm

Even thought my spine injury is very minor in comparison to what this person has this news fills me with hop at a normal future again some day.

Good luck in the trial.

[Link to this comment](#)

Volt

08/06/10 at 1:12 am

I've always said that anything we can do to help our soldiers is a must. I sincerely hope that this treatment is successful for him.

[Link to this comment](#)

sanud002

08/06/10 at 2:36 pm

This would be such a huge break through for the well being of injured soldiers. I'm so glad to the U.S. moving forward with the process of adequately developing stem cell research techniques. I was definitely starting to get worried that we would fall behind in this field due

to strict government regulations. Luckily we do some great labs in the U.S. doing amazing work. I just saw a great video the other day about the work of U.S. scientist Dr. Atala that highlights some his recent breakthroughs. I'll post a link to the video if you would like to see more for yourself.

<http://www.ndep.us/Building-Body-Parts>

[Link to this comment](#)

Prakarp

08/06/10 at 3:54 pm

The article mentions that there are 311,000 persons in the US with SCI. Although popular belief maintained that figure, the Christopher and Dana Reeve Foundation released a peer-reviewed, statistically validated survey that shows the number is actually much higher. 1,275,000 Americans suffer from a spinal cord injury. That amount is a subset of the over 5.5 million Americans who suffer from some sort of paralysis.

Here's the link to the first page of the study:

http://www.christopherreeve.org/site/c.mtKZKgMWKwG/b.5184189/k.5587/Paralysis_Facts__Figures.htm

(sorry for the terrible URL - it appears their webmaster could use some work on their site, but the survey itself is still solid)

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