

Stem cell research lab coming up in Jaipur

The Sawai Man Singh (SMS) medical college here will set up a stem cell research laboratory by April to undertake research in biotechnology, genetics and stem cells.

The laboratory, to be part of an advance research laboratory to come up in the state government-run institute, has been taken up under an Rs.70 million-project approved by the central government's department of science and technology.

Ashok Pangariya, principal of the SMS college, told IANS: 'Not only would it enhance the diagnostic facilities in the city, the stem cell research would also make treatment of degenerative diseases easier.'

The laboratory would provide a platform to the college faculty to understand the advances in research on diseases, he said. A special stem cell bank would also be created at the medical college.

The department of gynaecology, the central blood bank and the stem cell research lab would jointly run the bank, with a total estimated cost of Rs.30 million.

A proposal comprising as many as six projects on stem cell research had been sent to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). ICMR has already approved the first phase of the project.

The research projects sent to ICMR cover spinal cord injury, cancer, plastic surgery, urology, the cornea and multiple sclerosis.

Revised projects would be taken by ICMR in its next meeting scheduled in the third week of this month. Stem cells are primal cells common to all multi-cellular organisms that retain the ability to renew themselves through cell division and can differentiate into a wide range of specialised cell types.

Medical researchers believe that stem cell therapy has the potential to radically change the treatment of human diseases. A number of adult stem cell therapies exist, particularly bone marrow transplants.

A multi-disciplinary committee has also been constituted under the chairmanship of Adarsh Bhargava (gynaecology) to look into the ethical, legal, scientific and technical issues related to stem cell research.

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