

The 'miracle cure' that stems from self generated cells

People who suffer from complete paralysis of the lower half of the body could get a second lease of life, thanks to a path breaking stem cell treatment being offered by a hospital here.

The Lifeline Multi-Speciality Hospital (LMSH) has nearly perfected the art of making paraplegics walk again and managed to instill many of them with the confidence to lead a normal life.

The Lifeline Institute of Stem Cell Therapy and Research (LISTR) - the research and development division of LMSH - has discovered that autologous (self generated) bone marrow fluids containing stem cells can achieve what was deemed 'impossible' in medical history by technologically advanced countries like the US.

This can lead to stem cell treatments sans the controversial flip side of stem cells harvested from stillborn foetuses

Not long ago, Hollywood star Christopher Reeves, who had portrayed 'Superman', had spent the last part of his prematurely snuffed out life bound to a wheelchair because his paralysis couldn't be cured.

'Using the money provided by the late movie icon to improve the lot of paraplegics throughout the world, we have turned four ordinary people who faced a dismal future into supermen,' said J. S. Raj Kumar, the chairman of LMSH.

All four of these men had no hope after having been rendered immobile by accidents and rare medical disorders.

Now one of them, 25-year-old Akbar Ali, who was brought to LMSH in a coma on a stretcher from Dubai last year, betrays virtually no sign of the debilitating condition. Encouraged by his complete recovery, his parents are now searching for a bride for him.

'We harvest between 100 and 200 ml of stem cells in fluid form from the afflicted patients themselves and inject them into their spinal cords carefully to bring about this 'miracle' that has been cleared by statutory health bodies not only in India, but also in all major premier medical institutions abroad including the US.

'We have the highest global rate of success of 34 percent after sustained treatment to 50 select patients,' said Raj Kumar.

Two 19-year old patients - Prabhdeep Singh, a musician from Punjab who lost the power to move after a motor accident, and Srinivas, an aspiring accountant from [Chennai](#) who suffered from Transverse Myelitis (a devastating inflammation of the spinal cord that can cause irreversible paralysis), have also found hope.

'I had no feeling from the chest downwards after the mishap. Now I can walk with a little help,' said Singh, whose legs were encased in braces and moved with the assistance of attendants and a metal contrivance.

Srinivas has regained bladder control and is able to feel sensations in the lower part of his abdomen.

In spite of preferring younger patients 'who will heal quicker and better,' Raj Kumar's treatment has worked wonders for 46-year-old A. R. K. Reddy, an engineer who was employed in a multinational company till he fell on his back from a height of 11 feet about two months ago. He suffered multiple fractures to his lumbar spine and was rendered completely immobile.

Today, after stem cell therapy, Reddy is able to stand and move using a walker, and has regained bladder control and sensation in the lower body.

The stem cell therapy isn't the last horizon for paraplegics alone.

LISTR, which has tied up with Japan's Nichi Centre for Regenerative Medicine (NCRM), has found that stem cell cure can possibly be a viable alternative for liver transplants and cardiac bypass surgeries.

'Stem cell therapy can cure disabled livers, rejuvenate tired hearts, and make the pancreas of chronic diabetes patients secrete insulin to reduce dependency on injections and pills for a lifetime,' said Raj Kumar.

Another wonderful aspect of the treatment is its cost. Only about Rs.150,000 is needed for stem cell therapy while other regular treatments like transplants can cost up to twenty times more but have a success rate of below 15 percent.

Of the 50 patients under intensive treatment, 17 have shown marked improvement. Inspired by their recovery, another 100 are in the queue to benefit from the miraculous stem cell therapy.

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