



Revolutionary Stem Cell Treatment for Heart Disease

Australian scientists have made a major breakthrough in the treatment of heart disease; they have discovered a method of treating damaged hearts using the patients own adult stem cells. The new treatment is being developed at the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute in Sydney.

A joint effort by the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and St. Vincents Hospital, Sydney, the new treatment is revolutionary in that it is the first treatment that has shown the ability to permanently repair damaged heart tissue. Researchers working on the development of the new system have reported permanent changes including development of new blood vessels and repair of dead tissue in the heart.

Under the new treatment, heart patients are injected with a hormone that causes the release of beneficial stem cells from their bone marrow into the bloodstream. They are then made to exercise on a treadmill. The physical exertion causes the stem cells to travel quickly to their heart and come into action.

Upon reaching the heart, the stem cells start creating new blood vessels to restore blood circulation and improve the overall functioning of the heart. So far, tests have proven that the treatment method works. It has already passed safety tests and moved into the second phase of human trials recently.

Professor David Ma, Head of Blood and Stem Cell Research at St. Vincents believes the treatment is amazing because it has developed on a completely different track from the hypothesis on which its development began a few years ago. Its given us a new direction to attack the situation. Because of the study results we have changed our emphasis, he said.

According to Dr. Ma, the findings are extremely important in light of the fact that heart disease is already a huge problem in developed countries such as the US and the UK. At the same time, it has started taking on dangerous proportions even in developing

nations such as India and China.

In the opinion of Professor Bob Graham, Head of the Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute, the early results derived from preliminary testing of the treatment method are extremely promising.