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Stem cell bank within reach



Jeevan stem cell bank chairman Dr P Srinivasan and its medical director Dr Saranya Nanda Kumar at a press conference in Chennai on Thursday.

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Jeevan Blood Bank, a non-profit company, will establish a public stem cell bank, to provide high quality stem cells for treatment of nearly 70 medical conditions like blood cancer and other diseases.

Announcing this at a press conference in Chennai on Thursday, Dr P Srinivasan, chairman, Jeevan Blood Bank said the stem cell bank will be operated from March 2008 and it would collect, test, process and store about 40,000 units of stem cells collected from umbilical cord blood in five years.

Stem cells are considered as one of the best treatment options available today with a potential of curing nearly 70 medical conditions like blood cancer, many hematological conditions like Thalassemia and other diseases, he said.

Srinivasan said the bank would collect cord blood from donors, harvest stem cells, test for transmissible infections and store it. The safe compatible units will be later given to any one who needs them across the world.

He said 70 per cent of the stem cell capacity would be for public storage and 30 per cent for private storage.

For private storage, people should pay for the service, which can be used for funding the public storage, he added.

Jeevan stem cell bank hopes to complete its accreditation processes by international agencies by December 2008.

Further, the bank plans to publish the contents of a stem cell registry in the next 12 weeks in a website, so that a matching unit could be identified by any hospital across India and the world.

When a suitable unit of stem cell is available, it would be transported to the hospital where the patient is admitted for transplantation, he said.

Initially, the bank would function in a rented premises and would move to its own 25,000 sq.ft premises in the city by April 2009, Srinivasan added.

The initial capital cost for the project is Rs four crore and in the next five year it is expected to touch Rs 20 crore, he said.

Jeevan stem cell bank would provide matched stem cell units free of cost to poor patients and Rs one lakh for others.

A fee of Rs 75,000 has been fixed for collection of cord blood, from people who want from the private storage. The fee would be charged for processing, collection