

Regulation of autologous stem cell therapies

I am a 65 year old man who has led an active and healthy lifestyle. In recent years I have been troubled by advanced arthritis in both knees.

I have had arthroscopic treatment to both knees which has provided some relief, but my Orthopedic surgeon says my next step is knee replacements in both legs.

Late in 2014 I sought advice on autologous stem cell therapies from the Melbourne Stem Cell Centre as a means to either delay the knee replacements for several years or even avoid them altogether. I have also consulted my GP and Physiotherapist on their views of stem cell therapies from the Melbourne Stem Cell Centre and they are very supportive of this approach.

In conjunction with my GP I carefully investigated the stem cell treatments on offer from several providers. I chose the Melbourne Stem Cell Centre as it's research, which I am participating in, has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committees of Monash and La Trobe Universities and this reassures me that they are being carried out in accordance with appropriate medical guidelines and practice.

Stem cell therapy offers a chance for significant improvement in my quality of life, particularly in relation to pain and mobility, plus avoiding complex knee replacement surgery which would have to be repeated in 10 or so years due to the limited life of the prostheses.

Following stem cell harvesting and laboratory cell growth over a month, I have now had a stem cell injection into my left knee in December 2014 and my right knee in February 2015. Early indications on my left knee after 3 months are very positive.

I welcome the opportunity to provide input to the TGA's Consultation regarding the regulation of autologous stem cells as I understand that Government wishes to ensure that autologous stem cell therapy is appropriate and safe.

I believe it is important that the Government ensures that stem cell research can continue to help people like me and many others living with conditions that this therapy can help.

As a patient I hope that any changes the Government considers as part of this review of autologous stem cell therapies does not limit the therapies available to patients, many of whom live with crippling side-effects of their conditions.

Kind Regards

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