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# **The Global Guide to Stem Cell Therapy Providers**

Clinics, Hospitals, Referral Services, etc., from Around the World That Claim to Offer Safe and Effective Stem Cell-based Treatments and Therapies

Compiled by the editors of  
**Stem Cell Research News**

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**Stem Cell Research News** (biweekly, 24 issues/year)

- For-profit rate: US\$295.00
- Nonprofit rate: US\$219.00
- Personal rate: US\$119.00

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## Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the *Global Guide to Stem Cell Therapy Providers*.

The *Guide* lists more than fifty providers and referral services in 17 countries that *claim* to offer safe and effective stem cell therapies for numerous diseases and conditions. The ten firms in the United States do not themselves offer stem cell treatments, but instead refer, or make arrangements for, patients to receive treatments in other countries (mainly Mexico, as it turns out).

We do not maintain that this list is definitive. Clinics are popping up regularly all over the world to meet the demand for stem cell treatments that are banned in the United States until serious safety and efficacy issues are resolved. It's hard to keep up with all the activity. We will keep the *Guide* updated, however, and hope to provide customers with free updates within 6 months of purchase. (NOTE: the *Guide* does not include a country listing for the Dominican Republic, though contact information for a clinic there is included in the listing under Regenocyte.)

Medical tourism (also called health tourism) for stem cell treatments is definitely a growth industry, and is attracting quacks, snake oil salesmen, charlatans, mountebanks, etc., by the trainload. They take advantage of the fact that stem cell therapy is virtually unregulated in certain countries, and desperate patients and their families are willing to spend many thousands of dollars for the treatments themselves, as well as for travel, accommodations, etc. The provider Web sites are full of testimonials from supposedly satisfied patients. However, none of the providers offer scientific evidence of their treatments' success. And none spend any time discussing their failures.

We apologize for the lack of certain contact information (particularly street addresses) in some of the listings. We tried our best, but could not obtain the information in a straightforward way. The fact is, a large number of these companies/clinics don't really won't you to know where they are until they've hooked you. Many simply provide a contact page that you fill out and submit invisibly through the Web site.

All of the basic contact information provided in the *Guide* comes from the companies/clinics/hospitals themselves. Much of the miscellaneous information and commentary comes from 3<sup>rd</sup> party sources, including patient advocacy groups, news reports, blogs, etc. We tried to include pertinent information wherever possible, if only to balance the often incredible claims of the therapy providers.

Information provided on provider mission, diseases/disorders/conditions treated, and the sources of stem cells used in the treatments comes from the providers themselves, most often from their Web sites. We could not and did not verify the claims made by the companies/clinics, nor do we vouch for the truthfulness of the claims. Although we made every attempt to verify the contact information in the *Guide*, we cannot be 100% certain of accuracy.

It should be noted that many of the companies listed in the *Guide*, especially those with U.S. addresses, do not provide stem cell therapies themselves in the U.S. (because that's illegal), but through affiliated clinics in other countries. Often the companies provide the cells that are used in the procedures, or process autologous (patient's own) stem cells collected at the foreign clinic and ship them back for therapeutic use. Lastly,

some companies listed in the *Guide* merely promise to connect you with appropriate clinics worldwide, after their staff “analyzes” your needs and collects hefty referral fees.

We strongly recommend that you download and read the patient handbook published by the International Society of Stem Cell Researchers, a professional organization of legitimate stem cell scientists and researchers. You will find the PDF document at this link

([http://www.isscr.org/clinical\\_trans/pdfs/ISSCRPatientHandbook.pdf](http://www.isscr.org/clinical_trans/pdfs/ISSCRPatientHandbook.pdf)).

In the introduction to the handbook, the ISSCR states:

“Stem cell therapies are nearly all new and experimental. In these early stages, they may not work, and there may be downsides. Make sure you understand what to look out for before considering a stem cell therapy.

“Remember, most medical discoveries are based on years of research performed at universities and companies. There is a long process that shows first in laboratory studies and then in clinical research that something is safe and will work. Like a new drug, stem cell therapies must be assessed and meet certain standards before receiving approval from national regulatory bodies to be used to treat people.”

Many of the clinics listed in this *Guide* (with the exception of certain facilities offering long-accepted hematopoietic stem cell transplants to treat blood-related cancers) have never bothered to perform the “years of research” mentioned above, nor do their treatments “meet certain standards ...”

Compilation of this material took many, many hours of staff research time. If you’ve ever spent time on the Internet searching for this type of information, you know what we’re talking about. Having said that, we hope this *Guide* makes it a little easier – and a lot less time-consuming – to find, evaluate, assess, etc., the most visible of the stem cell therapy facilities around the world. As noted above, we will be keeping the *Guide* updated with future editions.

But we provide it with this word of caution:

*Caveat emptor ... Caveat aeger! (Let the buyer beware ... Let the patient beware!)*

Sincerely yours,

The Editors

July 2009

## Disclaimers and Disclosures

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## Beijing Hongtianji Neuroscience Academy (BHNA)

**Xixia Zhuang, Badachu, Shijingshan District  
Beijing, 100144  
China**

**Phone:** +086-10-88965507

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**Web site:** <http://www.nrrfr.com/>

### **Primary Contact Person:**

### **Mission Statement:**

According to the Web site: The clinic does not perform stem cell transplant procedures or therapies, but olfactory ensheathing cell transplantation. Under the direction of Dr. Huang Hongyun, Chinese neuroscientists at Beijing Hongtianji Neuroscience Academy (BHNA) have demonstrated some neurological functional recovery on patients with CNS diseases (e.g., chronic spinal cord injuries, traumatic brain damage, stroke, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or motor neuron disease, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, myelitis, multiple sclerosis and cerebral palsy) by using human olfactory ensheathing glial cell transplants (OEG or OEC transplantation). Their achievements are based on development of basic and clinical research around the world for recent twenty years. Their research indicates that it is possible to obtain neuro-regeneration, repair and functional recovery in patients who suffered from untreatable CNS diseases believed before, but this dream of the millennium has now become a reality as well. OEC transplantation has opened the door to neuro-regeneration, repair and functional recovery in clinic all over the world. It is believable that more and more effective methods will be combined and used to treat these patients with CNS diseases and damage in the future.

### **Diseases/Conditions Treated:**

Spinal cord injury, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease), Alzheimer's disease, cerebral palsy, stroke, Parkinson's disease, and other neurodegenerative conditions

### **Chief Source of Stem Cells:**

Olfactory ensheathing cells (OECs) come from nasal mucosa, which migrate to the olfactory nerve through the cribiform plate to the olfactory bulb. The olfactory nerve is the only part of the central nervous system that is known to regenerate continuously throughout adult life. This ability has been attributed to the presence of olfactory ensheathing cells (OECs). The primary purpose of OECs is to induce remyelination of

damaged nerves, as well as to allow for regeneration in specific circumstances. OECs and stem cells are totally different.

#### **Additional Information, Commentary, etc.:**

According to the Web site: Our aim is to restore as much neurological function as possible for our patients through the OECs transplantation. OECs transplantation is not a cure, but one kind of improvement for CNS diseases patients. Most of our SCI patients show improvement in sensory function, partial motor function, trunk balance, sweating and control of bowel movement and urine, and some male patients have also recovered sexual function. Most of our ALS patients have been able to achieve stabilization their neurological function for an indefinite period.

The fee for the OEC surgery is about US\$20,000-25,000 depending upon the duration of your stay at the hospital and the treatment your individual case requires. On April 1, 2007, the medical fee was adjusted to ¥155,000 RMB (Renminbi). You are expected to convert the amount ¥155,000 RMB into USD or Euro with latest exchange rate as you pay the fee. (NOTE: As of July 2009, ¥155,000 (RMB) is equivalent to US\$22,690.00).

The basic fee includes transportation from and to the airport, three meals daily for the patient and one caregiver for the duration of your treatment at the hospital, all medical tests, the surgery itself, your individual hospital room, and rehabilitation treatments, etc.

The payment can be made by official/certified check, wire transfer or cash. Please note: you must pay the balance before you obtain the OECs transplantation.

For independent information on this clinic, visit  
<http://www.quackwatch.com/06ResearchProjects/stemcell.html>

For example, Quackwatch notes: “In 2006, the journal *Neurorehabilitation and Neural Repair* published a detailed report on his results with seven patients whom the authors examined before and one or more times within a year after Huang’s treatment. The authors concluded: (a) five of the seven patients had significant complications (three had meningitis), (b) none of the patients showed objective evidence of improvement, and (c) unless Huang conducts a proper study, patients would be ill-advised to undergo his treatment. A report in the *Boston Globe* noted that Huang’s Web site includes profiles of patients he has treated for a wide variety of conditions with different causes and different symptoms, yet Huang treats them all with the same cells.”