

# Questions for the stem cell clinic



So, you've booked a consultation with a private clinic to find out about a stem cell treatment. Here are some questions for the clinic that can help you with your decision.

## The treatment

- Is this an approved medical procedure? If yes, who has approved it?
- Is the treatment considered 'experimental'? If so, is it being offered as part of a clinical trial?
- If part of a clinical trial, is the trial registered on ANZCTR, NIH Clinical Trials or other recognised registries?
- Who is funding this trial?
- What is the evidence that this treatment will work for my condition?
- Can you provide me with peer-reviewed publications that can support the likely benefit?
- Have you published your data? If so, where?
- Are there any risks associated with the treatment? What are the side-effects?
- Could the cells harm me? Could they form tumours or cause problems with my immune system?
- What is the cost and exactly what does this cost include?
- How many visits are required? Is there a new fee for each visit?
- Has this treatment been reviewed by an ethics committee? If so, which committee?
- If being offered in Australia, is this treatment eligible for a Medicare or private health insurance rebate?

## Travelling Overseas

- If travelling overseas, will my travel insurance cover my treatment? Will my travel insurance help me get home if I have a reaction or get sicker?
- If travelling overseas, are there likely to be additional costs or are these included in the fee (eg travel, accommodation, meals, insurance, medications, hospital bed costs, consumables used during the treatment, cell processing costs)?

## The procedure

- What type of cells are you using – mine or someone else’s?
- If using donor cells, where do they come from – fetal tissue, embryos, umbilical cord blood? Are they human or from other species? If they’re from another species, which one?
- Are the donor cells screened for viruses (HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HTLV-1 and HTLV-2)?
- Are the cells prepared in a licensed laboratory or using an approved device? If so, who prepares them? Who were the devices approved by?
- Do you use animal products to grow the cells and how do you guarantee there is no risk of contamination or infection?
- How are the cells delivered? Are they injected? If so, how and what are the possible complications of the injection?
- Do I need to take any medication before and after the treatment? Is there an additional charge for this medication?

## Care and cost

- Who is the doctor performing the treatment? Is he/she a specialist in treating my condition? (\*Note\* “stem cell specialist” or “regenerative medicine specialist” is not a recognised qualification)
- How much does the treatment cost and can I get a rebate from Medicare or my health insurer?
- Will I receive any other treatments or therapies when I am at the clinic? If so, does this attract an additional cost?
- What ongoing care will I receive? Does this attract additional charges?
- How will my health be evaluated after the treatment and by whom?

## My rights

- What happens if something goes wrong? Who do I contact?
- Who will cover the costs of any medical complications?
- What are my rights as a participant –for example confidentiality, my right to be informed of any new information that might come up?
- Do I have the right to withdraw from the treatment process?
- What compensation am I entitled to if I am injured?