Press Release

Research underway to prove the effectiveness of stem cell therapy in cerebral palsy

About 15% to 20% of physically disabled children suffer from this condition

New Delhi, 06 August 2017: One of the most common childhood motor disabilities, statistics indicate that cerebral palsy affects about 15% to 20% of physically disabled children. Its estimated incidence is around 3/1000 live births in India. Though there is no cure for this condition, recent research speaks of the possibilities that stem cell therapy can provide in treating the disorder.

Cerebral palsy is a term used to cover certain neurological conditions affecting movement. Children with this condition can find it hard to move certain parts of the body and the condition can vary in severity. Due to the damage to certain parts of the brain, both voluntary and involuntary movements can be affected.

Speaking about this, Padma Shri Awardee Dr K K Aggarwal, National President Indian Medical Association (IMA) and President Heart Care Foundation of India (HCFI) and Dr RN Tandon – Honorary Secretary General IMA in a joint statement, said, “This condition is not contagious and does not affect a child’s intelligence or cognitive ability. It also does not become worse with age. Currently, research is underway to show the effectiveness of stem cell therapy in this condition. This involves two steps: one, taking the patient’s bone marrow and second, injecting it back after it has been multiplied in the lab. The therapy sessions begin after this process. Once the effectiveness of this therapy is established, there could be an effort towards taking up ‘autologous’ stem cell therapy. Studies have indicated that the progress is quick in children below the age of 10 and this procedure can also cure muscular dystrophy and autism. People with cerebral palsy have a normal lifespan and can lead a good quality of life as well.”

Some common symptoms of cerebral palsy include overdeveloped or underdeveloped muscles, poor coordination and balance, involuntary movements, spastic paralysis, crawling in an unusual way, lying down in awkward positions, favoring one side of the body over the other, and limited range of movement.

Adding further, Dr Aggarwal, said, “Though stem cell therapy is being spoken of, there is still time to prove its effectiveness in the treatment of this condition. However, other kinds of therapy can help children with this condition achieve their maximum potential in growth and development. As soon as it is diagnosed, a child can begin therapy for movement, and other areas that need help, such as learning, speech, hearing, and social and emotional development.”
Some preventive measures can help reduce the risk of cerebral palsy in children. A woman who is planning to become pregnant should ensure that all her vaccinations are up-to-date. Additionally, it is important to:

- Attend all antenatal appointments
- Quit alcohol, tobacco, and drugs
- Indulge in regular exercise
- Eat healthy food

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**About IMA:** Indian Medical Association is the only representative, national voluntary organization of Doctors of Modern Scientific System of Medicine, which looks after the interest of doctors as well as the well being of the community at large. It has its Headquarter in Delhi and State / Terr. Branches in 30 States and Union Territories. It has over 2, 60,000 doctors as its members through more than 1765 active local branches spread across the country.

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