Abstract Submission

Cellular Therapies

Stem cell and tissue banking, incl. Cord blood

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KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTIONS OF PREGNANT WOMEN WITH REGARD TO COLLECTION AND BANKING OF UMBILICAL CORD BLOOD STEM CELLS IN NIGERIA.

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Background: Approximately 50% of patients who need an unrelated blood stem cell transplant are unable to find a timely suitable match due to the diversity of Human Leucocyte Antigen (HLA) alleles and antigens. This is particularly true for Nigerian patients who have unique stem cell matching needs reflecting Nigeria’s extensive ethnic diversity. To address this problem, the Bone Marrow Registry in Nigeria was launched on February 24, 2012 with 300 donors with the future plan of constructing a cord blood bank (CBB). Unfortunately, awareness levels remain a substantial limitation to harnessing the benefits of umbilical cord blood (UCB) especially among pregnant women whose support is crucial to the success of cord blood transplant program.

Aims: To examine the knowledge and perception of pregnant women with regard to collection and banking of umbilical cord blood stem cells.

Methods: On-going study with questionnaires administered to pregnant women attending antenatal clinics in Lagos University Teaching Hospital. Part 1 assessed issues of awareness and knowledge of UCB. Part 2 assessed perception and attitude towards UCB donation. Data was analysed using SPSS version 22.0 statistical package for windows manufactured by IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, United States.

Results: One hundred surveys have so far been analysed in this on-going study; 73.7% of the respondents were aware that UCB can be used to treat some diseases. Though the level of awareness of UCB was high more than two-thirds (70%) of the respondents were not confident of their knowledge of UCB and would like their healthcare provider to provide more information on purpose and uses of umbilical cord blood.

50% of the respondents agree to cord blood donation if a CBB were available in the country. 66.6% of the respondents that agreed to cord blood donation said religion will not influence their decision and 62.2 % of these respondents said they would prefer a public CBB to a private one. 49% of respondents disagree that donated cord blood should only be for the use of family members.

Summary / Conclusions: Nigeria with its large population is uniquely placed to set up the largest cord blood bank to cater for Nigerians and ultimately the whole of Africa. However, as is well understood there can be no blood donation without prioritizing donor education.

The findings of this on-going study exemplifies this fact as half of the study population expressed willingness to donate cord blood if a cord blood bank was available in the country. Not only do majority of the respondents agree to cord blood donation (CBD), they also choose to donate cord blood to a public blood bank. Ironically, this positive attitude towards CBD is despite being poorly informed, uneducated and lacking knowledge regarding UCB. Also, surprisingly in a deeply religious country, two-third of the women open to CBD admitted that religion has no influence on their decision to UCB donation.

Our results so far provide insights that infer that at the conclusion of this study the data gathered can be meaningfully incorporated into government cord blood banking policy.