

Stem cells from Germany for Australian boy

Search for donor around the world led to Leipzig

Leipzig, 15 May 2018. Transplanting stem cells is in many cases the only therapeutic option for people suffering from life-threatening diseases. Sometimes, the matching preparation must travel huge distances to the patient after searching for it all over the world. The present case demonstrates clearly the effort and the international collaboration that is often necessary for the recipient to be provided with the donated stem cells in time. The background of this logistic tour de force is the case of an Australian boy born in 2013, who suffers from so-called leukodystrophy caused by the metabolic disorder sphingolipidosis. In March, the search for a suitable stem cell donation led to the second-largest stem cell bank in Europe, Vita 34 from Leipzig.

A few years ago, stem cell deposits from umbilical cord blood were set up for the Norddeutsche Knochenmark- und Stammzellspender-Register (NKR - North German bone marrow and stem cell donor registry). When one of these preparations was tested positively to match the Australian patient, its shipping to the other side of the world had to be organised within the shortest time possible. Besides NKR and Vita 34, the German National Bone Marrow Registry was involved in the process as well as the relevant registries and the transplant centre in Australia, customs authorities on both continents and not least Lufthansa to prevent the preparation from being X-rayed at the airports. That these global efforts were justified, showed the results of the confirmatory typing at the latest, an enhanced typing process carried out while the shipping was being prepared: The sample matches ten out of ten of the patient's tissue characteristics and thus is like winning the lottery jackpot from a biological point of view. All the people involved in the project are now keeping their fingers crossed for the little patient.

Vita 34 AG

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About Vita 34

Vita 34 was founded in Leipzig in 1997 as the first private umbilical cord blood in Europe and is a full-service provider in the field of cryo-preservation, offering the collection logistics, the preparation, processing, and the storage of stem cells from umbilical cord blood and umbilical cord tissue. Stem cells are a valuable source material for medical cell therapies and are kept alive at temperatures of around minus 180 degrees Celsius to be applied later in medical treatments, if necessary. Over 215,000 customers from Germany and 28 other countries already have taken care of their children's health by means of a stem cell deposit with Vita 34.

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