

Stem cells - medical all-rounders

150,000 stem cell deposits at Vita 34

Leipzig, 7 April 2017. Vita 34 in Leipzig celebrates the 150000th stem cell storage and the 20th company anniversary with an international expert symposium on the application of stem cells in children. With 150,000 stem cell deposits from 29 countries in Europe and worldwide as well as 30 applications, Vita 34 is the largest and most experienced stem cell bank in the German-speaking countries.

“International recognition and success all over Europe are the incentive to further enhance our service profile. In the future, we are going to offer also cell therapeutics for the regenerative medicine in collaboration with medical institutions”, says Dr. André Gerth, CEO of Vita 34 AG.

Professor Joanne Kurtzberg from Duke University in North Carolina, USA, pioneer in the research and application of stem cells from umbilical cord blood, as well as physicians and researchers from the University Clinic Leipzig deliver insight into the great potential of stem cells in the treatment of infantile diseases during the scientific part of the event. Thereafter, Dr. Gerth gives the “Vita 34 Stem Cell Award” to Professor Kurtzberg to recognize her merits in medical research and therapeutic application.

Dr. Gerth together with the Prime Minister of Saxony Stanislaw Tillich and Leipzig’s deputy mayor for economics Uwe Albrecht symbolically store the 150000th umbilical cord blood preparation at Vita 34. Head of government Tillich says: “The Free State of Saxony can be proud of such innovative businesses. Leipzig as a location for business is a good example of how a unique symbiosis of highly qualified researchers and creative companies has developed in the course of the Free State’s biotechnology offensive since the year 2000. Success stories like the Bio City and Vita 34 contribute decisively to the further growth of the health-care industry and in particular to biomedicine getting more and more important.” Albrecht adds: “It is not a coincidence that Vita 34 could and can develop that successfully here in Leipzig: Our city, especially the Old Trade Fair (Alte Messe), is the optimal environment for such a specialized company from the biological and medical sector. Highly productive

medical institutions and research facilities are located in the immediate vicinity. Our health-care and biotechnology sector has developed exceptionally well in the last years. Leipzig meanwhile plays a well-established role on the international market and Vita 34 plays its part in that.”

To provide diseased children, who cannot be treated with stem cells, with high-quality medical therapies, Michael Fischer-Art, an artist from Leipzig, and Vita 34 resolved to bring a joint charity campaign into being. Fischer-Art gave a picture on the subject of stem cells particularly created for the purpose to Vita 34, which will be sold at an online auction for the benefit of the Children’s Hospital of Leipzig University within the next weeks.

Two young people receive particular attention on the occasion of the ceremony. Paula Thiel, who is 20 years old now, comes with her grandmother, who had given her granddaughter the first stem cell deposit at Vita 34 for her birth twenty years ago. In 17-year-old Jan Hömme, a blood disease (aplastic anemia) was fought successfully with the aid of stem cells from his younger brother’s stored umbilical cord. A symbol of his special connection to Vita 34: Last year, he was a highly dedicated intern at the laboratory in Leipzig and wants to study sciences after he passed his Abitur exams. “The example of Jan Hömme shows us quite impressively the meaningfulness of our efforts to facilitate stem cell storage for as many people as possible,” underlines Dr. Gerth.

About Vita 34

Vita 34 AG with headquarters in Leipzig is the largest and most experienced stem cell bank in the German-speaking countries. The company established in 1997, specializes in the storage of stem cells from umbilical cord blood and tissue for preventive medical care and the manufacture of stem cell transplants from umbilical cord blood. Currently, umbilical cord blood and tissue of about 150,000 children from Germany and other European and extra-European countries is stored. Vita 34 has proved the high quality of the previously cryo-preserved and stored stem cell preparations impressively by means of 30 applications already.

Vita 34 is the only German cord blood bank that is not only permitted to release umbilical cord blood for private healthcare, but also authorized to treat siblings or donate to third persons. This high standard is underscored by a patent for the cryo-preservation of umbilical cord tissue granted recently by the European Patent Office. Vita 34 is the first and so far only company in Germany that was given the permission to store umbilical cord tissue in order to extract stem cells for therapeutic purposes later.

Stem cells are already applied in the successful treatment of e.g. disorders of the hematopoietic system. Leading scientists assume that the possible therapeutic applications will become wider and that stem cells can contribute significantly to the effective treatment of not only age-related wear and tear and autoimmune diseases, but also neurological damages and degenerative diseases like heart attack or stroke.