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Andalucía Investiga 15.05.2006
The University Of Jaen Will Use Stem Cells For The Recovery Of Cartilaginous Lesions In Sportspeople

Researchers of the University of Jaen, Almeria and Granada, who belong to the group "Nuevas Tecnologías aplicadas a la Investigación" (CTS-107, new technologies applied to research) led by Dr. Antonia Aránega, in collaboration with the University of Malaga, are working on the recovery of cartilaginous microlesions in elite sportspeople using adult and embryonic stem cells.

This one-year long project, called 'Optimización de las condiciones medios de cultivo de células madre con finalidad de reparación de microlesiones osteocondrales en deportistas de alto nivel' (optimisation of the conditions and culture environment of stem cells for the recovery of osteochondral lesions in elite sportspeople) is part of a project of the Consejo Superior de Deportes of the Spanish Education and Sports Ministry, and is funded with 15,000 euros.

The research, headed by the lecturer of the University of Jaen, Juan Antonio Marchal Corrales, consists of optimising the isolation on the one hand of mesenchymal stem cells of peripheral blood in elite sportspeople, and on the other hand of adult stem cells of subjects with cartilaginous lesions.

According to Marchal, 'this project suggests, firstly, that osteochondral lesions in elite sportspeople are very difficult to overcome at 100%, and generally they get complicated in time with degenerative processes. Therefore, if these sportspeople do not recover from such lesions 100%, their performance will decrease. Secondly, due to the therapeutic potential of stem cells'.

The methodology of this research work, pioneer in Spain, consists of taking a blood sample to isolate the stem cells of sportspeople and people who suffer from any type of cartilaginous lesion in order to make these cells proliferate in a culture and try to differentiate them from chondrocytes, the specialized cells of cartilages.

The research team will shortly work with embryonic stem cells, as some of its members have worked in the Institute Karolinska of Stockholm, and have learnt to culture these human embryonic stem cells. They have more potentiality, that is, more capacity to proliferate and differentiate from any type of tissue.

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