Myths About Private Cord Blood Banking

Rahul Naithani¹

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To The Editor: Benign and malignant hematologic diseases, immune deficiencies and genetic diseases are the only approved uses of cord blood for hematopoietic stem cell transplantation today [1]. Lot of private cord blood banks have mushroomed and charge hefty fees for storage of cord blood. The chance of using umbilical cord blood for autologous use of hematopoietic stem cells is effectively between 1:75,000 and 1:100,000 [2]. In this regard, Tuteja et al. bring out alarming information that more than 50 % of doctors are unaware of correct indications for use of cord blood transplantation [3].

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has raised ethical concerns about promotional advertisements by private cord blood banks for future *self use*. There is no scientific basis for preservation of cord blood for future *self use and this practice is not recommended. Any other use apart from bone marrow transplantation outside of clinical trial is considered malpractice* [4]. There are also concerns regarding quality and viability of private cord blood [5].

There are special situations where private cord blood banking may be recommended. There may be a family where a child is already suffering from leu-

kemia or thalassemia and next child may not be fully HLA identical.

We need to be aware that scientific research in field of regenerative medicine is in continuous development. Eventually, it's a personal choice whether to store cord blood or not, but it should be an informed choice.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest None.

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✉ Rahul Naithani
dr_rahul6@hotmail.com

¹ Division of Hematology and Bone Marrow Transplantation, Max Superspeciality Hospital, New Delhi 110017, India