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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letter to the Editor regarding: "Cell transplantation in lumbar spine disc degeneration disease" (by C. Hohaus, T.M. Ganey, Y. Minkus and H.J. Meisel: Eur Spine J; 17, Suppl 4:492–503, December 2008)

H. J. Meisel[1]

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Dear Editor,

Regarding our paper on cell transplantation in respect to our previously published work, I would like to state as follows:

The first manuscript represented original work in intervertebral disc cell transplantation in a canine model. This study was modeled to predict safety and efficacy that would support clinical applications of expanded disc chondrocytes. "Disc Chondrocyte Transplantation in a Canine Model: A Treatment of damaged Intervertebral Disc" (*SPINE*; Vol. 28, Nr. 23: 2609–2620, 2003).

The second manuscript "Clinical Experience in cell-based Therapeutics: Disc Chondrocytes Transplantation. A Treatment for degenerated or Damaged Intervertebral Disc" (*Biomolecular Engineering* 24:5–21, 2007) used parts of our first publication from the 2003 manuscript published in *SPINE*.

In the translation from the preclinical to the clinical model we have used a very similar clinical design. Coupled with the therapeutic success assessed by the treatment, our intent was to share not only the clinical benefit, but also the foundation for safety that offered the confidence to proceed. We wanted the readers to connect in a single manuscript what the real translational aspect is about from bringing a preclinical model into clinical application.

This unfortunate overlap was brought to our attention and we responded with a letter of apology published in *SPINE* Vol. 39, Nr. 25: p A1552, 2014.

Our paper in *Eur Spine J* 2008, Vol. 17, Suppl. 4:492–503 is in part a summary of the World Forum for *Spine Research*: The intervertebral disc, held in Kyoto, Japan January 23–26, 2008.

In fact, we were asked by Dr. K. Ito to assemble the key contents of our work on cell transplantation for a *European Spine Journal* supplement. This made us borrow extensively from the two other articles mentioned above.

However, we added original work results from a different animal series using adipose cells for regenerative cell transplantation—in this case non-expanded autologous, adipose-derived stem cells into the disc space for regeneration of pre-degenerated segments.

This new approach was similar to the preclinical approach we had used 5 years earlier in our first canine trial showing that there are additional opportunities to regenerate degenerated disc without taking autologous disc material from the segment biopsy. Another new aspect was also presented in this paper as the first results of the canine trial of autologous-derived regenerative cell transplantation, which highlights a second cell source studied in a different animal series showing 6-month follow-up data.

Hoping to have clarified the situation, I look forward to the opportunity to submit further original work of our team to the *European Spine Journal*.

Conflict of interest None.

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