

The Australian Stem Cell Centre is the first Australian Biotechnology centre of Excellence

An embryonic stem cell has the unique capacity to renew itself indefinitely.

Stem cells are the body's own biological repair kit.



Australian Stem Cell Centre

www.stemcellcentre.edu.au

Media release

Australian Stem Cell Centre Leading the Way in Training Australian Scientists in Latest Stem Cell Discoveries

Wednesday 3 September 2008, Melbourne Australia:

The Australian Stem Cell Centre (ASCC) continues to build a world class Australian stem cell research community with the training of young researchers from across the country in the techniques of growing and using in research, human embryonic stem cells and, for the first time in Australia, human induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells.

The ASCC this week continues its role in training Australia's biotechnology and research workforce by hosting its tenth Human Embryonic Stem Cell Training Workshop, which for the first time in Australia will train researchers about iPS cells. iPS cells represent one of the most significant developments in stem cell research in recent times.

The ASCC course is the first of its kind in Australia. It is an intensive hands on laboratory based training course which allows four participants to gain valuable direct experience in culturing and analysing human pluripotent stem cells.

From Monday, participants from three states will spend four days receiving hands on training and lectures in state of the art facilities at the Australian Stem Cell Centre's Victorian laboratories. The participants will take back to their home institutions the knowledge and skills required to grow and expand human embryonic stem cells and iPS cells for use in research. They will also gain general knowledge around the creation and analysis of stem cells and learn about how stem cells are turned into the different cell types of the body, such as heart cells or red blood cells.

"This is really a wonderful opportunity for researchers from across Australia to increase their knowledge about the potential uses of embryonic stem cells and iPS cells in research," said ASCC's lead training scientist Associate Professor Ivan Bertonecello. "Both cells types hold a huge amount of promise in the understanding, and hopefully one day, the treatment of human disease".

Since the introduction of the iPS component into the already popular course, the ASCC has been busy responding to enquiries. The December 2008 course is already booked out and demand for 2009 places from local and international participants is strong.

In June 2008 scientists from the ASCC were the first in Australia to gain access to human induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells.

The iPS cells have been imported under an agreement with Professor James Thomson from the University of Wisconsin, USA who has developed the human iPS cell lines and was, at the same time as Professor Shinya Yamanaka from Japan, the first to describe human iPS cells in November 2007. Professor Thomson was also the first scientist to identify and describe human embryonic stem cells in the scientific press in 1998 and has been a leader in the field of embryonic stem cell research since.

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About the Human Embryonic Stem and Pluripotent Cell Training Workshops

The ASCC offers laboratory-based training courses, accompanied by a series of lectures, to investigators from across Australia and internationally wanting to learn how to isolate, maintain, propagate, manipulate, differentiate and analyse human embryonic cell. The course now includes a new component on iPS cells. The courses are run over 4 days, three times per year. The course is run on a cost recovery basis only.

About the Australian Stem Cell Centre

The **Australian Stem Cell Centre** is Australia's Biotechnology Centre of Excellence. The ASCC partners with leading Australian universities and research institutions, and brings together a critical mass of outstanding Australian stem cell research that is internationally competitive and well regarded.

The ASCC's vision is to undertake research of the highest quality in the stem cell field, in order to discover and ultimately commercialise new therapies for human disease.

The Australian Stem Cell Centre is funded by the Australian and Victorian Governments.

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