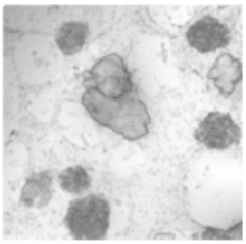
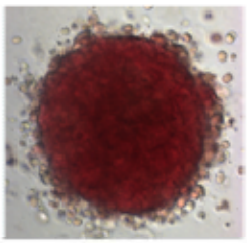
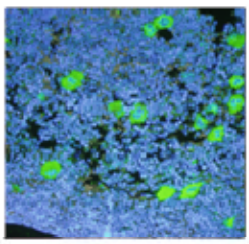


Australian Stem Cell Centre

www.stemcellentre.edu.au

Media Release

Training Australian Scientists in Latest Stem Cell Discoveries

3 May 2010, Melbourne Australia

The Australian Stem Cell Centre (ASCC) through StemCore, its national facility for the provision of stem cells and advice, continues to build a world class Australian stem cell research community. For the first time in Australia, young researchers will be trained in the techniques of growing and using human induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells in research.

iPS cells, discovered in 2006 when Japanese scientists reprogrammed ordinary skin cells into versatile stem cells, have made a significant impact on Australian research and are recognised as one of the most important developments in stem cell research in recent times. By offering the long-term prospect of personalised and disease specific cell lines being available for treating disease, testing medicines and for research purposes, they represent a new and innovative way for scientists to study and understand disease and development.

In reaction to this important scientific breakthrough the ASCC has developed its training programs by delivering the StemCore iPS Cell Workshop. The ASCC course is the first of its kind in Australia. It is an intensive hands-on laboratory based training course, which allows participants to gain valuable direct experience in growing and analysing human pluripotent stem cells. Demand for the course has been high and this week's inaugural course is fully booked.

From Monday, participants from across Australia will spend the week receiving hands-on training and lectures in state-of-the-art facilities at Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology located within the University of Queensland. The participants will take back to their home institutions the knowledge and skills required to make, grow and expand iPS cells for use in research. They will also learn how the stem cells created can be directed to turn into the different cell types of the body, such as heart cells or neural cells.

Associate Professor Ernst Wolvetang, a leading Australian expert in embryonic stem cells, iPS cells, cell reprogramming and genetic stability, leads the course. According to Associate Professor Wolvetang "more and more researchers are looking to use iPS cells as these reprogrammed cells can be generated from patients with genetic disorders to create and study disease models in the laboratory which may provide a future platform for drug screening" he added that "for example the StemCore iPS laboratory is helping Professor's Carolyn Sue and Alan MacKay-Sim to make iPS cell lines from patients with Parkinson's disease and Schizophrenia, respectively".

In addition to Associate Professor Wolvetang, the course features leading Australian iPS cell scientists including Dr Paul Verma from the Monash Institute of Medical Research, Dr Andrew Laslett of CSIRO, and Dr Jeremy Crook of the O'Brien Institute and Cytentia, an iPS cell bank.

Ends

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About the StemCore iPS Cell Pluripotent Cell Training Workshops

The ASCC through StemCore offers laboratory based training courses, accompanied by a series of lectures, to investigators from across Australia and internationally wanting to learn how to create, maintain, propagate, manipulate, differentiate and analyse iPS cells. The course complements the ASCC's long running human embryonic stem cell training course which teaches similar skills and techniques.

About StemCore

StemCore, the ASCC's Core Facility, underpins stem cell research in Australia via the provision of pluripotent stem cell products, services and training. Utilising the expertise and infrastructure of the ASCC, StemCore allows research laboratories to increase their efficiencies and outputs through outsourcing of commonplace or specialised activities.

StemCore operates two core laboratories, located at Monash University (Victoria) and the University of Queensland (Queensland). These state of the art laboratories are operated by teams experienced in the production and quality control of pluripotent stem cells.

About the ASCC

The Australian Stem Cell Centre was founded to capitalise on Australia's significant strengths in the field of stem cell research. The ASCC was selected in 2002, in a competitive bid process, as Australia's Biotechnology Centre of Excellence, an initiative of the Australian Government. The Centre provides a unique national resource for stem cell researchers to deliver outcomes that benefit the wider Australian biotechnology industry and will ultimately contribute innovative solutions to human health challenges.

The Centre was established with the financial and in-kind support of a number of institutions of which the current voting Members, who retain ultimate oversight of the Centre, are: Monash University, University of Queensland, Howard Florey Institute and University of Adelaide. The additional Stakeholder institutes are: University of Melbourne, Baker IDI, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, Victor Chang Cardiac Research Institute and Mater Medical Research Institute.

The ASCC is governed by a Board of Directors with independent scientific oversight and support from an eminent Scientific Advisory Board.

Total funding of $100 million has been awarded to the ASCC by the Australian Government and is administered by the Australian Research Council and the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research. The funding is provided in instalments from 2002 to 2011. To complement Australian Government funding, the State Government of Victoria's Science Technology and Innovation program awarded the Australian Stem Cell Centre a further $11 million to support key infrastructure in Victoria.

Together the ASCC and partnering organisations support a critical mass of Australian stem cell research that is internationally competitive. The ASCC currently funds research at leading institutes and universities in Victoria, Queensland, South Australia and New South Wales with the major hubs of activity centred in Victoria and Queensland.