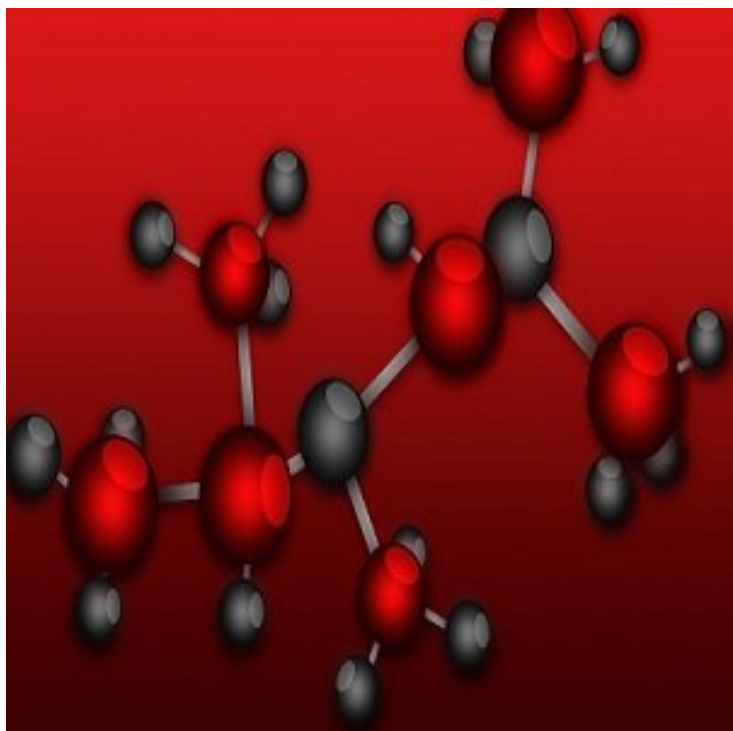


Public Stem Cell banking: an Initiative to save lives

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Singapore: In a bid to save millions of children by preserving their stem cells, Life cells, India's largest umbilical cord banking system is setting up a public stem cell bank at the cost of Rs 30,000 crore.

LifeCell's managing director, Mr Mayur Abhaya, announced the plans for the public facility at a function to mark the storage of 100,000 units of cord blood at its private banking facility.

Mr Abhaya said that parents can store their child's stem cells and use them for treating various rare genetic disorders. He added, "In the US, over 70 percent of the local populace are able to find matching stem cell units for treatments. In India, however, 80 percent of the people are unable to find a match."

Mr Abhaya appreciated the support of the Tamil Nadu government towards this initiative, stating that the government was the first in the country to grant Rs 9 crore to store 3,000 cord blood donations.

Launching this initiative, Life cell's brand ambassador, Ms Aishwarya Rai Bacchan stressed on the necessity for parents to become aware and realize the importance of stem cell banking, highlighting that she had preserved her own daughter's cells.

She mentioned, "The decision to bank umbilical cord cells had to be taken at a time when I was taking baby steps to parenthood. And on our part, we did some research, spoke to friends and our families, who advised us on the importance of stem cell banking."

Mrs Bachchan emphasized that stem cells were a precious gift that a parent could preserve for their child's well-being.