



SA bioscience companies strike new deal to expand scope of stem cell research

A pair of San Antonio biotech companies, BioBridge Global and [StemBioSys](#) Inc., have agreed to expand the scope of their collaborative relationship in an effort to bring a new source of stem cells to the research market.

Officials with the two organizations said the new deal will better leverage the strengths of StemBioSys and nonprofit BioBridge Global's regenerative medicine subsidiary, GenCure, in the stem cell arena.

Under the new agreement, GenCure will provide selected umbilical cord blood units and isolate the small subset of mesenchymal stem cells from that cord blood. StemBioSys will then use its patented HPME, or high performance microenvironment, technology to expand the volume of these cells. It is anticipated that those cells will then be further expanded using a commercial-scale bioreactor owned by GenCure.

The cells will be marketed to researchers in the U.S. StemBioSys will initially oversee manufacturing, marketing and sales of the cells.

The hope is that this joint effort between StemBioSys and BioBridge Global will expedite the development of clinical solutions using mesenchymal stem cells.

"This will allow us to grow revenue and have a wider footprint in the regenerative medicine space," StemBioSys CEO [Bob Hutchens](#) told me when asked about the impact the new deal will have on the development-stage company. "It's a second product for us to sell."

Through their initial collaboration, BioBridge's GenCure and StemBioSys confirmed that commercially viable quantities of cells can be efficiently produced in bioreactors. However, StemBioSys officials said the HPME technology is critical to ensuring a sufficient quantity of cells is available to start the expansion in the commercial-scale bioreactor.

HPME technology replicates the three-dimensional home in which stem cells naturally reside and proliferate. It enables users to isolate and grow stem cells from a variety of sources more rapidly.

Hutchens, who was in Atlanta with [Linda Myers](#), CEO of BioBridge Global, for the 2015 World Stem Cell Summit, said the expanded collaboration between the two San Antonio entities will trigger new commercial applications for the privately held company's HPME technology.

[StemBioSys](#) first forged a relationship with another BioBridge Global subsidiary, South Texas Blood & Tissue Center, in 2012. The Blood & Tissue Center has supplied cord blood cells to the company for research.

In 2014, BioBridge Global built lab space inside its San Antonio headquarters to accommodate stem cell research and development activities. The new deal with StemBioSys will expand the use of those facilities.

[Sean Thompson](#), interim chief operations officer for GenCure, said the expanded collaboration with StemBioSys will enable the organization to “move one step closer” to its goal of delivering life-enhancing products to the bedside.

“We want to be one of the leading companies in regenerative medicine,” Hutchens said. “This is the next step. This deal absolutely helps put us on the map.”

Officials with BioBridge Global and StemBioSys expect that the new cell product will be introduced commercially in mid-2016.

Source: <http://www.bizjournals.com/sanantonio/news/2015/12/09/sa-bioscience-companies-strike-new-deal-to-expand.html>

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