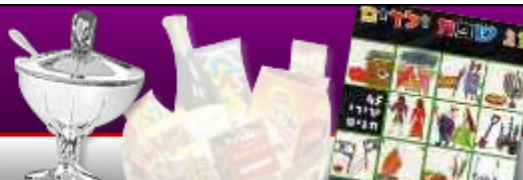


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Human stem cells help mice in MS research

Sep. 7, 2008

Judy Siegel-Itzkovich , THE JERUSALEM POST

Human embryonic stem cells injected by Hadassah University Medical Center scientists in the brains of mice with an animal model of multiple sclerosis have for the first time halted the progress of the disease, it was reported Sunday.

The clinical and pathological symptoms the potentially devastating autoimmune neurological disorder, which include muscle weakness and paralysis, were significantly reduced, the researchers said.

Prof. Tamir Ben-Hur, chairman of the Ein Kerem hospital's neurology department, and Benjamin Reubinoff, head of the human embryonic stem cell research center, have been working together on this and other projects for years.

The researchers said they expect the influence of the stem cell implantation in counteracting the inflammation will in future be integrated with the use of embryonic stem cells to repair and renew the myelin nerve sheathing in the brain. They believe the "encouraging results" will lead to further developments and eventually to clinical trials in humans.

The CellCure company, a subsidiary of Hadassit (the Hadassah Medical Organization's research and development arm), will promote the application of the research findings. Clinical trials are due to begin in about three years. The research was funded partially by the National Science Foundation and the Morasha Foundation.

There are some 6,000 MS victims in Israel and many tens of thousands more around the world. Most are diagnosed before the age of 40.

The lab results were published over the weekend in the on-line Proceedings of the [US] Library of Science One (PLoS One).

Michal Aharonovich and Dr. Ofira Einstein of Hadassah and Prof. Hans Lesman of the University of Vienna took part in the research.

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