FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA RELEASE

Singapore Cord Blood Bank (SCBB)'s new Community Cord Blood Banking service offers flexibility to mothers

Singapore, 13 February 2018 – Singapore's only public cord blood bank, today announced that it has expanded its role to offer family storage services, under its new community cord blood banking service. Community Cord Blood Banking is the first of its kind in Singapore and Southeast Asia.

The comprehensive approach to cord blood banking allows parents-to-be the flexibility to store their baby's cord blood for the family and if the family chooses to donate later, to be used in life-saving treatment for patients with blood cancers and disorders like Leukaemia and Lymphoma.

Parents-to-be are given clear and balanced information on cord blood banking options, empowering them to make an informed decision before the birth of their child.

Mrs Tan-Huang Shuo Mei, Chief Executive Officer, Singapore Cord Blood Bank said, "Ensuring that Singapore has a healthy pool of cord blood available to meet the transplant needs of our multi-ethnic population remains our top priority. This service arose from repeated requests from parents who wanted to store their baby's cord blood with SCBB, with the option to donate later. Currently, more than 50% of cord blood from babies are neither donated nor stored privately. If we can help to store these precious cord blood units that are rich in stem cells, we can potentially save more lives."

SINGAPORE CORD BLOOD BANK LIMITED
Operations Office
c/o KK Women's & Children's Hospital • 100 Bukit Timah Road • Women's Tower Basement 1 • Unit 0B60A • Singapore 229899
Administrative Office
c/o VIVA-CCF Hub • 8 Sinaran Drive • #03-01 • Novena Specialist Centre • Singapore 307470
UEN No. 200405615H • Website: www.scbb.com.sg • Facebook: www.facebook.com/thescbb

Since 2005, donated cord blood from SCBB has benefitted 226 patients with life-threatening blood cancers and disorders in Singapore and over 16 countries in the world. In addition cord blood is presently being studied for use in regenerative medicine or for treating non-blood diseases including type 1 diabetes, cardiovascular repair, traumatic brain injury, cerebral palsy and autism.

“The biggest use of cord blood stem cells is in the area of allogeneic bone marrow transplantation, where an unrelated recipient is transplanted using cord blood for a variety of blood disorders diseases. An individual’s own stem cells are rarely used for treating blood diseases. However, with future advances in stem cell research, we could see more cord blood stem cells being used to treat other conditions and diseases”, shared A/Prof Aloysius Ho, Medical Director of SCBB.

“SCBB has facilitated many transplants in Singapore and around the world, which assures me that my baby’s cord blood is in good hands. The transparency in the benefits of cord blood was another reason we choose SCBB. The option to also donate to the public cord blood inventory after we choose not to store it for our family provides us the best of both worlds. shared Ms Caz Lim, a mother who used SCBB’s family banking service.

The Community Cord Blood banking service is currently available at KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital, National University Hospital and Singapore General Hospital. The service will be extended to the private hospitals in the near future.

Parents who are interested to know more about the Community Cord Blood Banking can contact 6394-5011 from 8:30am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday or visit www.scbb.com.sg to register online.

Please refer to Annex A for a fact sheet on Community Cord Blood Banking and Annex B for list of Chinese terms.

For media enquiries and interviews, please contact:

Singapore Cord Blood Bank

Ms Charlene Han

Direct line: 6229 3717

Mobile: 9106 4754

E: charlene.han.j.j@scbb.com.sg

SingHealth Group Communications

Ms Syaheeda Aryanie Sapari

Direct line: 6377 8055

Mobile: 9826 5394

E: syaheeda.aryanie.sapari@singhealth.com.sg

About Singapore Cord Blood Bank (SCBB)

SCBB is the first and only public cord blood bank in Singapore. Its mission is to provide quality cord blood units through internationally accredited practices to improve transplant outcomes, support cellular therapy and related research. Founded in 2005, SCBB is a non-profit organisation committed to saving lives through serving the needs of patients and the community. An internationally accredited cord blood bank of Asian Ethnicity, SCBB adheres to stringent and internationally accredited standards for the collection, processing, banking and distribution of cord blood units.

It was founded by Singapore Health Services (SingHealth), National Healthcare Group (NHG), Children's Cancer Foundation (CCF) and Club Rainbow. It is supported by Children's Cancer Foundation, Club Rainbow, Khoo Foundation, Lee Foundation, Shaw Foundation, SingHealth Fund, corporate donors and philanthropists.

For more information, visit www.scbb.com.sg

Annex A

Fact sheet on Community Cord Blood Banking

Community Cord Blood Banking

An integrated Hybrid Cord Blood Banking model for the Community

Introduction

The clinical application of Cord Blood has grown dramatically in the past 25 years as an alternative source of haematopoietic stem cells in haematopoietic stem cell transplantation[1] and recently in the field of regenerative medicine. Umbilical cord blood banking and its therapeutic application has raised several ethical issues: medical indications, autologous versus allogeneic use, ownership, commercialisation, quality assurance and many others. Singapore Cord Blood Bank aims to address the key ethical issues[2] surrounding Cord Blood banking through its new initiative on Community Cord Blood Banking.

SCBB's Unique Community Cord Blood Banking Approach

SCBB's Community Cord Blood Banking is a variation of Crossover Banking[3], an integrated hybrid banking[4, 5] model of both public and family banking. It has been established by adopting the guiding principles issued by The World Marrow Donor Association (WMDA)[6] and opinions of international bioethics groups[7]. Following the basic ethical principles (beneficence/non-maleficence, autonomy and justice)[8], this new approach shall provide clear and balanced information on cord blood banking options, including the benefits and limitations of public and family banking[9]. Recommendations from various medical agencies and governing bodies are shared to increase public awareness and to help parents make an informed decision.

Public Cord Blood Banking: Cord blood is an alternative source of stem cells for the treatment of haematological malignancies (such as leukaemia) and non-malignant disorders (immune deficiencies, haemoglobinopathies and metabolic disorders)[10, 11]. Public cord blood banks collect process and store donated cord blood units and make them available to any patient who needs a transplant. It is not reserved for the family. A public donation is made as a purely altruistic act, solely for the benefit of others.

Cord Blood donation is performed under strict quality standards to make sure the cord blood unit is usable for unrelated allogeneic transplant. If the public donation criteria are not met, parents can either choose to store it for their family or the cord blood unit may be used for research (if consent was provided) to improve the transplant process for future patients. If neither options were selected the unit will be discarded.

Cord blood donation to a public cord blood bank is strongly encouraged by various medical societies and agencies like the American Medical Association, American Association of Pediatrics, Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (UK) and World Marrow Donor Association, and supported by the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies.

Family Cord Blood Banking: Parents can choose to store their baby's cord blood for potential future clinical application for their family members. In most cases the stored cord blood can be used for the same child (**autologous)** or the siblings (**related allogeneic**). There are currently limited clinical indications for the use of autologous cord blood[12]. It is not recommended to use one's own stem cells (autologous) for treating hereditary or haematological diseases[13]. However, in recent years, there have been clinical trials on the use of one's own cord blood for cerebral palsy, hypoxic-ischemic encephalopathy, autism, etc., with increasing interest in new therapies for non-homologous use of cord blood[14,15]. The minimal acceptable criteria for family banking are set based on the current clinical trial requirements.

When parents do not wish to continue storing their baby's cord blood, they can choose to donate it to SCBB's public cord blood inventory anytime in the future, if the units are suitable for public donation.

Directed Cord Blood Banking: An existing programme in SCBB, referred to as Related Donor Cord Programme (RDCP), is the collection and storage of cord blood for family use when a member of the family (usually a sibling) has a life-threatening disease that may be potentially treated through cord blood stem cell transplant. A referral by a Paediatric Haematologist/Oncologist is required under this programme.

How does the Community benefit?

Parents will be empowered with balanced and factual information on the advantages and constraints of public donation and family banking. This approach allows for greater awareness and better understanding of the uses of cord blood. The improved quality of family banking cord blood units will enhance the potential use for various clinical indications[3]. Qualified units stored in family banking can also be donated for unrelated transplants anytime in future, serving the whole community.

About SCBB

Established in 2005, SCBB is a non-profit organisation offering public and family cord blood banking, committed to saving lives by providing ethnically diverse quality cord blood units to meet the needs of patients and the community.

SCBB is accredited for its cord blood activities by AABB (formerly known as American Association of Blood Banks) and FACT-NetCord. In line with its commitment to provide the highest standard in safety and quality, SCBB delivers its services through the practice of internationally accredited techniques of collection, processing, testing, banking and disposition of cord blood units for transplants.

Affiliated to National Marrow Donor Program in the US, SCBB's public cord blood units are listed on Bone Marrow Donors Worldwide (BMDW), a global stem cell donor database. These units are accessible by Transplant Centres around the world searching to match cord blood units to facilitate a life-saving stem cell transplant for their patients.

SCBB has an ethnically diverse Cord Blood Units (CBUs) in its public inventory to support unrelated allogeneic hematopoietic stem cell transplants for patients suffering from blood cancers and disorders, improving their prospects of finding a life-saving stem cell match. SCBB has successfully facilitated cord blood transplants for 226* beneficiaries (both paediatric and adult) in Singapore and around the world.

* as at 31 January 2018

References

1. Smith AR, Wagner JE. Alternative haematopoietic stem cell sources for transplantation: place of umbilical cord blood Br J Haematol. 2009 Oct; 147(2):246-61.

2. Petrini C. Umbilical cord blood collection, storage and use: ethical issues. Blood Transfusion. 2010; 8:139–148.

3. KK Ballen, F Verter and J Kurtzberg. Umbilical cord blood donation: public or private? Bone Marrow Transplantation (2015) 50, 1271–1278.

4. Guilcher GMT, Fernandez CV, Joffe S. Are hybrid umbilical cord blood banks really the best of both worlds? J Med Ethnics 2015; 41:272-275.

5. O'Connor M, Samuel G, Jordens C and Kerridge I. Umbilical cord blood banking: Beyond the public-private divide. J Law Medicine 2012; 19:512-6.

6. World Marrow Donor Association (WMDA). The Utility of Autologous or Family Cord Blood Unit Storage: Policy Statement. 20110402-CBWG-INFO-Family Storage; April 2011.

7. Carlo Petrini. Ethical issues in umbilical cord blood banking: a comparative analysis of documents from national and international institutions. Transfusion. 2013; 53:902-910.

8. Petrini C. (2014) European Regulations and Ethical Issues on Cord Blood Banking. In: Ilic D. (eds) Stem Cell Banking. Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine. Springer, New York, NY.

9. Armson BA, Allan DS, Casper RF. Umbilical Cord Blood: Counselling, Collection, and Banking. J Obstet Gynaecol Can 2015; 37(9):832–844.

10. Karen K. Ballen, Eliane Gluckman, and Hal E. Broxmeyer. Umbilical cord blood transplantation: the first 25 years and beyond. Blood. 2013 Jul 25; 122(4): 491–498.

11. Brunstein CG, Setubal DC, Wagner JE (2007) Expanding the role of umbilical cord blood transplantation. Br J Haematol 137: 20-35.

12. Shearer WT, Lubin BH, Cairo MS, Notarangelo LD. Cord Blood Banking for Potential Future Transplantation. Pediatrics. 2017 Nov; 140(5).

13. Corsano B, Sacchini D, Sulekova M, Minacori R, Refolo P, Spagnolo AG. Allogeneic verses Autologous: ethnical issues in umbilical cord blood use. European Journal of Bioethics 2015, 6(1):11 67-86.

14. Roura S, Pujal JM, Galvez-Monton C and Bayes-Genis A. The role and potential of umbilical cord blood in an era of new therapies: a review. Stem Cell Research & Therapy 2015, 6:123

15. Kogler G, Critser P, Trapp T, Yoder M (2009) Future of cord blood for nononcology uses. Bone Marrow Transplant 44: 683-697.

Annex B

List of Chinese Terms

Singapore Cord Blood Bank	新加坡脐带血库
Mrs. Tan-Huang Shuo Mei SCBB Chief Executive Officer	黃鑠嵋女士 新加坡脐带血库首席执行官
A/Prof Aloysius Ho SCBB Medical Director	Ho Yew Leng 医生 新加坡脐带血库总监
Community Cord Blood Banking Services	综合性脐带血库服务
Family Cord Blood Banking Services	家庭脐带血库服务
Non-Profit Public Cord Blood Bank	非盈利公共脐带血库
Cord Blood Donation	脐带血捐赠
Haematopoietic Stem Cells	造血干细胞
Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant	造血干细胞移植手术
Hereditary/Genetic Diseases	遗传疾病
Blood Cancer	血癌
Haematological (Blood) Diseases	血液疾病
Cellular Therapy	细胞治疗
Clinical Trials	临床试验
Medical Research	医学研究
Regenerative Medicine	再生医学
Cerebral Palsy	脑性麻痹
Hypoxic-ischemic Encephalopathy	缺氧缺血性脑病
Autism	自闭症