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## **Breakthrough technique expands stem cell count in cord blood donations**

*Researcher at Genexco enables stem cells to treat more patients*

INDIANAPOLIS (April 21, 2015) – Donations of umbilical cord blood can now provide more stem cells and a greater probability of successful treatment for patients. Dr. Joanne Kurtzberg, CEO of Genexco, has developed a method that increases the number of stem cells found in blood taken from the umbilical cord of newborns by up to 400 percent.

On average, umbilical cord blood contains only 10 percent of the stem cells that are found in bone marrow and peripheral blood donations. In addition, cord blood transplants fail about 10 percent of the time, reducing the available amount of an already scarce supply. The new development will increase the number of stem cells from each cord blood donation in order to improve these statistics.

“We are very excited about this technique. I hope it will really help all the patients with blood or immune system diseases to get the treatment they need,” said Dr. Kurtzberg.

The new technique uses dimethyl prostaglandin E<sub>2</sub> to amplify the stem cells in the cord blood. Clinical trials have shown that patients who receive the expanded stem cells

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recover their infection-fighting white blood cells twice as fast as patients receiving normal cord blood cells.

“The patients we’re working with have shown great progress with the expanded cells so we can’t wait for this method to become widely used,” said Dr. John Miller, a researcher at Genexco.

Cord blood transplants are preferred to bone marrow transplants because a perfect tissue match with the donor and patient is not required. This development could also allow for stem cell donations to be expanded and stored, creating a large enough supply to treat patients and eliminate the need for future donations.

Cord blood transplants are designed to treat patients with blood cancers and blood and immune system disorders. More than 20,000 cord blood transplants have been performed worldwide since 1988, when the first transplant was completed.

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*Genexco is a startup genome-sequencing company based in Greenwood, Ind. The company began in 1999 with only four employees. Genexco now employs more than 40 scientists and researchers and is becoming a well-known stem cell researching organization across the nation. For more information, visit [www.genexcosciences.com](http://www.genexcosciences.com).*