

Stem Cell Injections May Help Heal Diabetic Foot Ulcers

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An on-going clinical research trial using adult stem cells may help to improve blood flow and heal chronic sores for millions of people with diabetes who develop peripheral arterial disease (PAD) and critical limb ischemia (CLI). During the procedure, adult stem cells are carefully extracted from the blood of a patient affected with CLI and injected directly into the same patient's calf muscle. Early research shows that the stem cells work to replenish blood vessels in the lower legs – a process known as angiogenesis. Once the new blood vessels begin restoring proper blood flow, typically experienced several weeks after injection, many patients soon begin to see and feel improvement in overall lower limb circulation, and increased healing in any diabetic foot ulcerations present.

According to Vickie R. Driver, DPM, MS, member of the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA), and Director of Clinical Research Foot Care, Endovascular and Vascular Services at Boston Medical Center, the treatment in the initial clinical trials positively impacted cells in the body that are affected by PAD and CLI." Many patients are not eligible to undergo typical surgical procedures that reestablish blood flow, or have had a procedure that was not completely successful.

That's why stem cell treatments such as this, which are minimally invasive by comparison, are so critically important to further develop," said Dr. Driver, who is the principal investigator of the trial at Boston University Medical Center. The novel clinical trial, sponsored by Northwestern University, also has several other test sites set up nationally.

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