

## Press release n. 62

### XXXIV EDITION MEETING FOR FRIENDSHIP AMONG PEOPLES *THE HUMAN PERSON: A STATE OF EMERGENCY* AUGUST 18-24 2013 - RIMINI FIERA

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### Adult Stem Cells

*They may cure more than 70 diseases. A study on epilepsy*

Rimini, august 2013 - Mimosa Room is one of the smallest of the new fair of Rimini. It is packed, the audience was standing in line well before 7 p.m., the time of the meeting on adult stem cells which has been promoted by the foundation InScientiaFides. "Adult stem cells have a much lower power than embryonic stem cells but can be reprogrammed back to the original power."The speaker is Luca Pierelli, professor at La Sapienza University and director of the department of Transfusion Medicine at San Camillo Forlanini in Rome. Today there are over seventy diseases treated with these cells, including leukemia, thalassemia, lymphoma and myeloma. Prior to this discovery it was believed that only embryonic stem cells, those which form cells of different organs during conception, had a right to development and were the only ones capable of regenerating tissues and organs. Instead, the 'worked' cells "have the same power as embryonic stem cells without the destruction of the embryo and avoiding to deal with ethical issues," said Pierelli.

Adult stem cells are reprogrammed by giving practical help in the treatment of epilepsy. The study is carried out under the guidance of Domenico Coviello, Director of the Laboratory of Human Genetics, Galliera Hospital of Genoa and co-president of the Science and Life. His laboratory isolated the mutated gene that causes epilepsy. Cells are produced and then reprogrammed; they acquire the force of embryonic stem cells becoming childhood brain tissue. It is thus possible to study in vitro those reactions caused by epilepsy avoiding to invade the young patients and to understand why that change make "change current to the brain", to use his words.

The lights are dimmed to show a movie: Giacomo Sintini speaks framed in his volleyball uniform standard A1. "On June 2011 I was diagnosed with cancer of the lymphatic system. I was 32, my wife 28, my little girl 3. During the seven cycles of chemotherapy I managed to collect stem cells for marrow bone transplantation. I'm alive thanks to the doctors, my willpower, to the people who stayed with me, to God. "On May 8 2012 Sintini returned to play and the following year he made his team, Trentino Volley, win the league title, together with the award for best player too. "My desire now is to give confidence to people with cancer – announced – to offer an help to those who face this disease." Really man

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emerges where life becomes pressing.

A project on the collection and preservation of umbilical cord blood is presented by Daniel Mazzocchetti, PhD in biotechnology InScientiaFides. "The European Parliament has decreed the importance of the collection and preservation of umbilical cord blood for the treatment of many diseases." In fact, in Italy in 2012 about 550 thousand children were born but the samples of umbilical cord blood collected were 2426, only 0.4%. This happens because of the lack of information and of a collection network. But also because the current legislation provides for a threshold of cell concentration, below which the storage is considered unnecessary. However, it is apparent now that the concentration may be lower than that established and be considered as reliable. "We need a partnership between public and private system - offers Giuseppe Ragusa, a professor of economics at the University LUISS Guido Carli University in Rome - for the collection and storage of samples."

Sandro Ricci, general manager of the Foundation Meeting for friendship among peoples and moderator of the meeting, concludes: "The testimony is the culmination of a work. The road is drawn, the debate is still going on in order to let comparison and sharing be possible. Be information, and not who is its owner, the one which draws the scientific path."

(C.C.)

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