

stunning breakthrough

STEM CELL THERAPY BEATS CRIPPLING RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS

Injections can end pain forever

IN A stunning breakthrough, scientists have cured a woman of excruciating rheumatoid arthritis — with an injection of stem cells from her sister.

Her painful condition disappeared before she even left the hospital — and 18 months later, there are still no signs of the disease that once affected her joints.

This spectacular cure offers new hope to the approximately 500,000 Americans suffering from severe rheumatoid arthritis (RA) that does not respond to drugs.

“Stem cell therapy represents a significant advance in the war against rheumatoid arthritis,” declares Dr. Richard Burt, chief of the Division of Immunotherapy at Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, who headed the research effort.

And Dr. Jack Klippel, president of the Arthritis Foundation, told *The ENQUIRER*: “Stem cell therapy looks very promising for the treatment of severe, progressive, and intractable (drug-resistant) cases of RA.

500,000

“It is estimated that, of the approximately 2.1 million cases of RA in the U.S., some 25 percent are severe, progressive and intractable. These individuals are potential candidates for this new therapy.”

Dr. Burt, who published the dramatic results in the journal *“Arthritis & Rheumatism,”* revealed: “The subject was a 52-year-

old female who had been suffering for some 10 years with severe rheumatoid arthritis.

“She tried to control the RA with a wide spectrum of over-the-counter preparations and prescription medicines, but they only provided, at best, fleeting relief.

“It was definitely an extreme case where 24 of her joints were swollen and 14 other joints were affected — either tender or deformed or both.”

Stem cells are immature cells that produce other blood cells. They can develop into any type of cell tissue needed by the body. “The goal was to replace her diseased joint cells with healthy new ones,” said Dr. Burt.

The woman’s younger sister agreed to donate the vital stem cells, and tests showed they were an ideal match.

“For stem cell transplants, the degree of cellular compatibility has to be greater than for an organ transplant. Basically, only siblings can qualify as donors. Parents do not have the proper degree of compatibility,” noted Dr. Burt.

Using the latest techniques, doctors stimulated

stem cell growth in the sister and then four days later, extracted them through a painless two-hour procedure.

The next step in the process involves giving anti-rejection drugs to the patient receiving the cells.

The stem cells are converted into joint cells and then infused into the patient through the arm — a procedure that takes only about 20 minutes.

In the case of the 52-year-old patient, everything went like clockwork. There were no problems with rejection or infection. “Overall, she was hospitalized for 2-3

‘Her symptoms disappeared before she left the hospital’



STEM CELLS (top) can be stored (above) until they are n

weeks for the stem cell therapy,” said Dr. Burt.

MIRACLE

“Remarkably, her RA symptoms — such as morning stiffness, swelling and muscular pain — had disappeared before she even departed the hospital... a dramatic response to our treatment.”

The patient continues to be monitored regularly — and the stem cell therapy has clearly worked a miracle in her life.

Eighteen months later, the disease remains in complete remission. All her rheumatoid nodules are gone — and she is not taking any medications for the disease.

“In short, her quality of

life has improved appreciably!” said Dr. Burt. Soon doctors hope to treat others.

At first those with drug-resistant cases will be helped, but Dr. Burt hopes to help others, who control their symptoms with drugs might well opt for this procedure to free themselves of a constant dependence upon medications.

“The use of stem cell therapy against the most common form of arthritis, osteoarthritis, is also within the realm of feasibility.”

“And, of course, we are continuing to test stem cell therapy on a broad array of diseases, as the potential appears to be virtually limitless.”

—FRANKLIN