

KNOWLEDGE OF THE POTENTIAL OF STEM CELL
THERAPY FOR TREATMENT OF DIABETES AMONG
MALAYSIANS IN THE KLANG VALLEY

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ABSTRACT

Diabetes is one of the most devastating diseases. Inadequate blood glucose control results on many long term complications. Insulin-secreting β -cells in the islet of Langerhans are damaged in diabetic patients to different extents, either through an autoimmune reaction present in type 1 diabetic patients or through changes within β -cells that affect their function in patients suffering from type 2 diabetes. Cell replacement strategies via islet transplantation offer potential therapeutic options for diabetic patients. Potential source for the preparation of transplantable insulin-producing tissue are β -cell stem or progenitor cells and they are derived from pancreas, liver, and bone marrow. This study is aimed to assess the knowledge of Malaysians in the Klang Valley on stem cell therapy for treatment of diabetes. A cross sectional survey was done randomly in April 2013 on public in the Klang Valley. It includes men and women of adolescent age group up to 60 years and above. A total of 160 questionnaires were distributed. Ten were discarded as it was incomplete. Among them only 64% of the respondents understood the purpose of stem cell research for cure of medical conditions. Some 30% did not understand and remaining 6% were not sure of the benefits which could be reaped. From those who understood stem cell research, only 37% were familiar with stem cell therapy for diabetes and remaining 63% were unaware. Accurate and detailed information regarding the promising effects of this therapy for diabetes need to be provided to the general population.