



spotlight on health

Exploring Treatment Options For Heart Disease

(NAPSA)—Heart disease—which includes heart failure, high blood pressure and stroke—now accounts for more than one of every three deaths in America, according to the American Heart Association.



Dr. Marc Hedrick

While many believe only baby boomers have to worry about heart problems, the National Institutes of Health reports that more than 25 percent of heart failure cases involve people under 60 years old, and heart-related

problems are expected to increase.

The good news is that new treatment options are on the horizon. One in particular has shown promise in turning unwanted pounds into a viable therapy.

Turning Fat into Treatment Options

Fat, the squishy, unwelcome tissue just beneath the skin, is often considered one of the leading contributors to heart problems. Ironically, it is also the richest source in the body for noncontroversial adult stem cells, which researchers believe one day will be used to heal ailing hearts. Even better, most everyone is willing to spare a little of it.

“Because heart disease results in a weaker heart, the ability of adult stem cells to repair or regenerate a damaged heart could improve the quality of life for patients,” said Dr. Marc Hedrick, president of stem cell company Cytori Therapeutics. “Fat provides an ideal source for adult stem

cells because the cells are easily accessed through a simple liposuctionlike procedure.”

Stem Cells and Heart Disease

Inspired by several studies, stem cells from a patient’s bone marrow have shown early evidence of repairing hearts suffering from heart attacks or chronic heart conditions. The potential promise could be beneficial for patients suffering from coronary artery disease, often caused by the destruction of heart muscle when blood flow is reduced or cut off. Adult stem cells can help the body regenerate heart tissue, as well as blood vessels that deliver oxygen and nutrients.

In the case of fat tissue, Hedrick believes that one day heart attack patients will be able to enter the emergency room and immediately undergo a minor liposuction-type procedure. About an hour later, the stem cells removed from this fat tissue could be re-injected into arteries that supply blood to the heart to start healing damaged muscle and limit the size and severity of the injury. The first stage of human testing started in Europe in early 2007 with hopes of the therapy being broadly available in four to six years.

“The medical profession is on the verge of changing the way heart attack victims are treated,” Hedrick said. “With the evidence we’ve seen to date, it is conceivable that adult stem cell treatments could soon help patients live longer, healthier lives.”

To learn more about potential adult stem cell treatments for heart disease, visit www.cardiaccelltherapy.net.