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NEW YORK STEM CELL FOUNDATION APPLAUDS HARVARD STEM CELL INSTITUTE'S CREATION OF 20 NEW DISEASE-SPECIFIC STEM CELL LINES

A Significant Advancement in the Effort to Study the Major Diseases of Our Time

NEW YORK, NY (August 7, 2008) – The New York Stem Cell Foundation (NYSCF) – a privately-funded non-profit organization dedicated to advancing cures for major diseases through stem cell research – today applauded the announcement by Harvard Stem Cell Institute (HSCI) scientists that they have produced twenty new disease-specific stem cell lines. These new lines will enable researchers to closely study diseases in the laboratory – rather than in patients – as they progress, with the ultimate goal of developing more effective treatments and cures.

In a paper published in the online edition of the journal *Cell*, HSCI researcher George Q. Daley, MD, PhD, and colleagues Konrad Hochedlinger and Chad Cowan reported that they created the stem cell lines using the induced pluripotent stem cell (iPS) technique, which involves “reprogramming” somatic cells. The new lines were derived from cells taken from children and adults suffering from various diseases and disorders, including Parkinson’s disease, two forms of Muscular Dystrophy and Down Syndrome.

According to HSCI Co-director Doug Melton, who is also a member of NYSCF’s Medical Advisory Board, these and other new lines produced by HSCI will be deposited in a dedicated HSCI “core” facility at Massachusetts General Hospital.

“This remarkable advancement, together with the A.L.S. research announced last week by HSCI Principal Faculty Member and NYSCF Chief Scientific Officer Kevin Eggan and his Harvard and Columbia colleagues, makes this an exciting time of rapid progress for stem cell science,” said Susan L. Solomon, CEO of the New York Stem Cell Foundation. “It is imperative that we continue to encourage and support stem cell research in whatever form it takes, including both iPS reprogramming and human embryonic stem cell research. The search for cures is too important to close off any avenue that scientists believe is leading us closer to that goal.”

“Dr. Daley and his colleagues have provided researchers with critical tools we need as we seek to understand how diseases work and how we can prevent their progression,” said Dr. Eggan. “This important new achievement – and the next advances in stem cell research – is made possible by the continued utilization of embryonic stem cells, which very much remain the ‘gold standard’ in this area of endeavor.”

About The New York Stem Cell Foundation

Founded in 2005, The New York Stem Cell Foundation is a privately funded foundation dedicated to furthering stem cell research to advance the search for cures of the major diseases of our time.

The foundation opened the first privately funded stem cell laboratory in New York City in March 2006 to serve as a “safe haven” where scientists can conduct advanced stem cell research free of federal restrictions. The organization supports scientists engaged in stem cell research through grants, fellowships and symposia; runs collaborative, state-of-the-art research facilities supported entirely with private funds and directly focused on curing disease; and educates the public about the importance and potential benefits of stem cell research.

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