

## **Focus Group #2: Current Stem Cell Research in the Intervertebral Disc**

Date and time: Monday May 29, 13:00-16:00

Location: Hilton, Athens Erato B

Session Chairs/contact persons:

Prof. Dr. Benjamin Gantenbein, CH & Prof. Dr. Daisuke Sakai, JP

Outline: The aim of this focus group is to summarize recent research on therapeutic strategies to regenerate the intervertebral disc (IVD) involving progenitor cells or therapeutic molecules isolated from progenitor-like cells. A special focus will be on the current understanding of valid nucleus pulposus and annulus fibrosus phenotypic markers. Special attention will be given to

- What cell types and progenitors are truly present in the IVD?
- The role of notochordal secretome as a potential therapeutic drug
- Nutritional aspects of adding foreign cells to a limiting system
- What could be the therapeutic role for nucleus pulposus progenitor cells (NPPC)?

Target: To reach a consensus on the current understanding on IVD phenotype markers and future research to be addressed. Which should be the main research direction for future research?

Follow-up strategy: A common publication/review will be aimed for from the discussions/conclusions from this focus group on what is the current experimental evidence and what will be the future direction to explore these exciting regenerative strategies.

### Possible invited speakers for debate/discussion:

People who are in favor of stem cell therapy / therapeutic drugs

- Sibylle Grad, CH (will be attending, pers. Comm.)
- Judith Hoyand, UK (will be attending, pers. Comm.)
- Nam Vo, US (will be attending, pers. Comm.)
- Fackson Mwale, CA (is not confirmed)
- Lisbet Haglund, CA (will be attending, pers. Comm.)

Opportunists, provocateurs

- Jill Urban, UK (will be attending, pers. Comm.)
- Keita Ito, NL (not confirmed yet)
- Marianna Tryfonidou, NL (will be attending, pers. Comm.)
- Victor Leung, HK (will be attending, pers. Comm.)