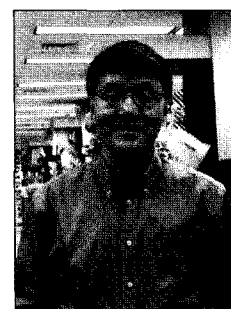


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Stem Cell Therapy of Intractable Human Diseases: Potentials and Pitfalls

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Regenerative medicine through transplantation of stem cells is expected to be a new medical paradigm for treatment of numerous intractable human diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular, Alzheimer and Parkinson's diseases. Parkinson's disease (PD) is a particularly attractive stem cell therapy target because of its well-known underlying pathogenesis consisting of the selective degeneration of A9 dopaminergic neurons in the substantia nigra. Indeed, some cases of PD have been successfully treated with the transplantation of embryonic midbrain precursor cells from aborted fetus thus providing the proof-of-principle of the potential of stem cell therapy. However, ethical and practical issues limit this approach. We have systematically investigated several key issues of stem cell therapy using animal models of PD, on successful replication of these studies in human stem cells and clinical trials. I will present our results addressing these issues and discuss the potentials and pitfalls of this novel approach.
