

EDITORIAL

Moving a 'head' with stem cells

Although there has been a good deal of hysteria in a field that has a tendency to become rather overheated, it is apparent that the ability to cultivate stem cells from adult tissues for repair of those and other tissues has one of the greatest potentials for therapy the world has ever seen.

This is even more relevant when one considers the oral/craniofacial/dental complex; if primary intervention in disease is unsuccessful, then the repair of the resulting damage becomes a major area of activity. This is true of both acquired and inherited disease.

It is to our great advantage that cellular/tissue engineered repair of such defects is amenable to both the harvesting of and seeding with such cells. This is due to the fact that the oral/craniofacial/dental complex is a rich bed of such cells; craniofacial musculature, oral mucosa, periodontium and pulp are reported to be a rich reservoir of such cells. Not only are the tissues of the oral/craniofacial complex easily accessible, they also are composed of structures derived from the neural crest; this may well bestow additional properties over

and above tissues from elsewhere in the body. In addition, it is well known that the tissues of the oral/craniofacial/dental complex are highly active and constantly remodel again lending credence to the concept of multifunctional cell types.

With this in mind, it is with great pleasure that *Oral Diseases* presents a series of review articles detailing both the identity and biological response of stem cells from various oral/craniofacial/dental niches and also the use of stem cells in the repair of this anatomical region. This series contains eight articles and these are running currently with the remainder due to appear in subsequent issues. These state-of-the-art articles have looked to combine the knowledge of both established names in the field and some new names and to cast the net across a range of countries. I know that the authors have enjoyed the opportunity to present the reviews and I sincerely hope and expect you, the readers, to embrace and learn from this endeavour.

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