

26th Feb. 2023

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AOCN India Position Statement on Stem Cell Therapy

Association of Child Neurology(AOCN), India strongly supports the recommendations of the committee set up by the Ethics and Medical Registration Board of the National Medical Council(www.nmc.org.in) regarding stem cell use in Autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

Excerpts from the recommendations:

Guidelines and expert opinions: National and international guidelines, including Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) guidelines are uniform in their conclusion that there is insufficient evidence for stem cell therapy in ASD and do not recommend it as a treatment for ASD, and call for more high-quality research. Many experts in the field have noted prevailing unethical practice of offering SCT as a treatment for ASD. Further, they have expressed concern and warned about indiscriminate promotion and predatory marketing of stem cell therapies in ASD leading to creation of false hopes, unrealistic expectations, and exploitation of the affected population and their families.

The final recommendations of the expert committee were as follows:

1. Current Status: Stem cell therapy is **not recommended** as a treatment for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in clinical practice.
2. In view of the above recommendation, use of Stem cell in ASD, its promotion and advertisement will be considered as **professional misconduct**.
3. Further research needs to be conducted and encouraged in terms of well-designed Double-blind randomized controlled trials to explore the safety and efficacy of Stem Cell therapy in ASD.

Similarly, the efficacy and safety of stem cell therapy in other pediatric neurological conditions like cerebral palsy, some advanced neurodegenerative conditions, neuromuscular disorders like Duchenne muscular dystrophy, spinal muscular atrophy and few other neurogenetic conditions is not proven as per current available scientific evidence. Hence, AOCN India does not support routine commercial use of stem cell therapy for ASD and other neurological disorders.



Association Of Child Neurology, India

REGISTRATION No 426000

ADDRESS- BUNGALOW NO 4, VINOBAPURI, LAJPAT NAGAR, NEW DELHI - 110024

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While there may be a potential for stem cell therapy to treat paediatric neurological conditions in the future, as of now it should be reserved for research trials under strict regulatory control and should not be used in clinical practice and on a commercial basis.

Dr. Sheffali Gulati

President AOCN India

Dr. Lokesh Lingappa

President Elect

Dr. Renu Suthar

EB member (North)

Dr. Mini Sreedharan

EB member (South)

Dr. Mahesh Kamate

Secretary AOCN India

Dr. Sandeep Patil

EB member (West)

Dr. Prashant Jauhari

Treasurer

Dr. Anaita Hedge

Immediate Past President

Kalpana Datta

Dr. Kalpana Datta

EB member (East)

Dr. Prashant Utage

EB member (Central)

The position statement has been approved by all the past presidents of the AOCN

Website: aocn.org.in

Email: aocn.india@gmail.com