

Stem cells: Varese teaches the world

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A research centre from near Varese has gone to the United States to teach them a thing or two. This is, by no means, everyday news, but we have become accustomed to hearing about **Biocell, in Busto Arsizio**. Last March, the company was successful in the 13th World Congress on Human Reproduction, and last September, collaboration began with the Harvard Medical School on researching retinitis pigmentosa. **On 24 October, there is a conference in Boston**, to present the activity of the Italian Centre, which is ready to teach the world.

The Biocell Centre, from Busto Arsizio, is specialised in **cryopreserving amniotic stem cells**. Women that already have to undergo amniocentesis for other reasons can also choose to have these cells extracted from the amniotic fluid surrounding their child, and then have them stored. This service is **a sort of health insurance policy**; in the future, the cells may be used in the adult to combat certain kinds of disease. Amniotic stem cells are “primitive” cells that can change into any type of cell in our body.

The laboratory in Busto Arsizio is the first in the world where cryopreserve amniotic stem cells can be cryopreserved for 19 years.

The stem cells taken from the amniotic fluid have the advantage of not creating any **moral dilemmas**, unlike those taken from embryos. “What we offer women is a golden opportunity to give their children the most precious gift, life itself,” explains **Prof. Giuseppe Simoni**, former lecturer in Medical Genetics at Milan university, and scientific director of Biocell. “We have all seen the progresses made in science, which even today have enabled us to achieve things that were unthinkable only a few years ago. Stem cell research will lead to extraordinary results, and cryopreservation will enable us to be ready when scientific progress comes knocking on our door.”

This entirely Italian centre is seeking to bring together research and interest in the ethical market, in Italy. Maybe this is the key to success.

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