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NEWS

Banking on the Blood

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A new and selective craze or a promise for everyone's future?

In recent years there has been a lot of debate concerning stem cell research and the possibility to potentially cure individuals, if and when there is an onset of health problems.

Nowadays, parents have the option, if financially able, to have blood collected from the umbilical cord at birth and saved for an annual fee at places like the Family Cord Blood Services in Santa Monica and many other facilities world-wide. Call it the new form of life insurance, or as Molly Israel, spokesperson for The Scholl Institute of Bioethics, says, "Collecting blood from the umbilical cord at birth is an extensive procedure, but the reality of the situation is that it does not harm the baby, and it is insurance toward the future." The Scholl Institute of Bioethics, which has close ties to the Pro-life Peace Corps, demonstrate many people's openness to this ideal of biological security.

Similarly, individuals behind the scenes such as Dr. Charles Sims, co-owner and medical director of Family Cord Blood Services, remark on the benefits of this procedure. "Unlike typical Stem cells," says Dr. Charles Sims, "the cord blood is safer, easier to preserve, and has a greater growth ability. Nonetheless, we are aware of the various debates over such things as the cost of the procedure, it's effectiveness in the long-run, and the ever popular issue of making donation accessible to the public—not just the child the blood was saved for."

Ultimately, with so much still unknown, it is hard to truly say whether such a procedure will protect one's child from various future illnesses, or everyone for that matter. But one thing is for sure, collecting and preserving umbilical cord blood does help to ease parents' fears and give hope for the future.

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