



## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

### **Transplantation and cell therapy: new strategies for treating blood diseases and infections**

**Barcelona, 29 March 2016** - Key leaders in the field of Cellular Therapy will highlight new applications to potentially cure patients with blood diseases and infections on the occasion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Cell Therapy Day. This one-day session will take place on Monday 4 April during the 42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting of the European Society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation that will welcome more than 4,500 delegates in the host city of Valencia, Spain.

Cellular Therapy is an emerging medical science that is today facing a unique developmental phase, well documented by the outstanding and growing numbers of clinical trials. Such an exponential growth requires proper infrastructures, cell repositories, clinical registries, technical and regulatory guidelines for appropriate cell manipulation and validation of the innovative therapeutic approaches in multicentric clinical trials.

The programme of the 5<sup>th</sup> Cell Therapy Day was designed in a joint effort by the EBMT Cellular Therapy and Immunobiology Working Party (CTIWP) and the local organising committee. A panel of international speakers will discuss the following topics during the various sessions: “procedural aspects of minimally-manipulated cell products”; “quality control”; “impact of JACIE in Europe and beyond”; “from Cell Therapy facilities to GMP”; “highlights on new applications” (including the development of CD19-CAR T cells).

The following day, on Tuesday 5 April, the CTIWP will hold its scientific session. New scientific insights will be presented and debated, including the presentation of the prestigious Jon J. van Rood Award for the best paper in the immunobiology of allogeneic haematopoietic stem cell transplantation.

The EBMT Cell Therapy Day and the scientific sessions have become an integral part of the CTIWP’s mission. The CTIWP aims at fostering cellular therapy in Europe, through a continuous crosstalk between basic science findings, transplant immunobiology observations and implementation of industry sponsored-trials cellular designed to answer unmet medical needs. Christian Chabannon, Secretary of the CTIWP explains: “The Cellular Therapy and Immunobiology Working Party is taking advantage of the culture and background of the EBMT at this exciting time when we see innovative cellular and gene therapies enter the field concomitantly with a renewed interest of the industry for the field.”

In addition, one of the objectives of the CTIWP is to identify centres of excellence that have the additional capacity to design and evaluate innovative cellular therapies on their own. The following example illustrates well this objective: Chiara Bonini, Head of the Experimental Hematology Unit in San Raffaele Scientific Institute in Milan and Chair of the EBMT CTIWP, launched an outstanding procedure called “TCR-gene editing” allowing to generate a large number of T lymphocytes specific for a given tumor. The results of this innovative technology were published in 2012 in the *Nature Medicine journal*. Since then, this procedure has been implemented by many transplant research centres around the world. One of them is the Hospital Clinic de Barcelona (HCB) that is currently implementing a platform of development of CAR-CD19 and will launch a clinical trial using this CAR-CD19 in adults and children.

For further information about the various oral and poster sessions, please visit the Annual Meeting website – [www.ebmt2016.org](http://www.ebmt2016.org) and the online programme: <https://b-com.mci-group.com/EventProgramme/EBMT2016.aspx>



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#### **About the European society for Blood and Marrow Transplantation (EBMT)**

The EBMT is a not-for-profit medical and scientific organisation established in 1974. It is dedicated to fighting life-threatening blood cancers and diseases and improving patients' lives. The EBMT Members - more than 4,000 physicians, nurses, scientists and other healthcare professionals - participate in a unique collaborative network of peers involved in haematopoietic stem cell transplantation (HSCT) and cellular therapy research. The membership encompasses at least 600 centres who are performing or are involved in HSCT in more than 60 countries. The EBMT holds a central role in performing co-operative studies and disseminating state-of-the-art knowledge aimed at increasing survival rates and enhancing the quality of life of patients with life-threatening blood cancers and diseases.

For further information about the EBMT, please visit the website: [www.ebmt.org](http://www.ebmt.org) and follow us on Twitter: @TheEBMT

#### **About the EBMT Cellular Therapy and Immunobiology Working Party (CTIWP)**

The mission of the EBMT CTIWP is to understand and exploit the biological including immunological events occurring upon haematopoietic stem cell transplantation at large, and to implement modern cellular therapies based on cell and gene engineering approaches to improve transplantation outcomes.

- Expand the existing EBMT Registry through the capture of detailed data that describe the nature of cellular therapies – minimally manipulated as well as extensively manufactured delivered to recipients, whatever the provider: cell processing facility or industry
- Further our understanding of biological mechanisms underlying the clinical efficacy and toxicity of HSCT and hematopoietic cellular therapies
- Promote exchanges and cooperation between centers and programs engaged in the development of innovative cellular therapies that belong to the same family of products (genetically engineered T-cells, NK cells, MSC ...)
- Define the minimal requirements to participate in early industry-sponsored clinical trials that will evaluate this new generation of cellular products manufactured and distributed as Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products, and map European centers and programs enabled with such capacities.

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