Foreword

OrthoBiologics: Science or Snake Oil?

Mark D. Miller, MD
Consulting Editor

In many ways, the commercial appeal and financial benefits of OrthoBiologics, from joint juice to stem cells, has outpaced the science. Just browse the Internet or thumb through an airplane magazine and you can get a feel for the sensationalism that many institutes, providers, and industry have created about this topic. It is often difficult to sort out the science here. One problem is the tremendous placebo effect of many OrthoBiologic treatment options. Who would pay thousands of dollars for a treatment and then tell their friends (or admit to themselves) that it didn't work? Another problem is how to measure the effect of these treatments.

One key issue to sort out is what is rightly termed a "stem cell." Pluripotent cells can be obtained from blood, bone marrow, and even adipose tissue (who wouldn't be willing to give up some fat) and concentrated to yield higher numbers of these cells, but true stem cells need to be isolated and cultured to create meaningful numbers of true stem cells. And this cannot be done in the United States. To their credit, the Food and Drug Administration is policing this process, and we have all seen headlines about clinics that have been shut down for "manipulating" stem cells. Other countries do not have these restrictions, and some argue that this puts us at a disadvantage in treating our patients. We should all follow the results of OrthoBiologics in these less restricted countries and then advocate for policy change if efficacy and safety are proven.

In the interim, I recommend that we all put science first. This issue of *Clinics in Sports Medicine* is a great start. Drs Frank and Cole are international experts in this area and have invited an all-star group of authors to cover this important topic. I encourage you to read and understand each article and then keep up on the literature on this important topic. And...perhaps most importantly, consider the patient. It's not about how much

you can charge them (in almost all cases out of their own pockets), but how you can offer the best, scientifically proven, and reasonably priced treatment options to those individuals who have entrusted themselves to our care.

Thank you,

Mark D. Miller, MD
Division of Sports Medicine
Department of Orthopaedic Surgery
University of Virginia
James Madison University
400 Ray C. Hunt Drive, Suite 330
Charlottesville, VA 22908-0159, USA

E-mail address:
mdm3p@virginia.edu