

[>> Back to the article](#)

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Science Snippets

MORE CORD BLOOD WITH NEW FACILITY

COMMERCIAL enterprise CordLife - which processes and stores blood from babies' umbilical cords - is expanding 'at least 1 1/2 times its current capacity', says group chief executive officer Steven Fang.

The company is opening a new facility in Science Park II by the end of next month. This will be able to store at least 30,000 babies' cord blood till adulthood.

For parents, cord blood banking is an insurance against major illnesses such as leukaemia or other cancers, as the cells in this blood have been found useful in therapies.

CordLife is on an aggressive expansion drive.

The Australian-listed company has just launched another cord blood banking facility in Jakarta with South-east Asian pharmaceutical company, Kalbe Farma.

CordLife says an even larger facility will be launched in Kolkata, India, by year's end.

MAKING STEM CELLS LAST LONGER

STEM cells usually cannot wait to mature into specialised cells but local researchers have found a way to rein them in, without disturbing their genetic make-up.

Scientists at the Genome Institute of Singapore have discovered that, by using proteins H3K4me3 and H3K27me3, they are able to maintain stem cells in their prime state - before they divide into specialised body cells.

Also, the proteins do not alter the stem cells' DNA, ensuring that they are still able to divide if need be.

This gives researchers a wider window of time for performing experiments and future medical applications.

FILM ON SWEDISH BIOLOGIST DEBUTS HERE

A FILM celebrating the accomplishments of Swedish biologist Carolus Linnaeus 300 years ago debuted in Singapore this week.

Linnaeus Expedition - An Adventure On Seven Continents, was screened at the Singapore Botanic Gardens on Thursday.

Carolus Linnaeus is considered the father of plant and animal classification. He is also accredited with proving sexual reproduction in plants.

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