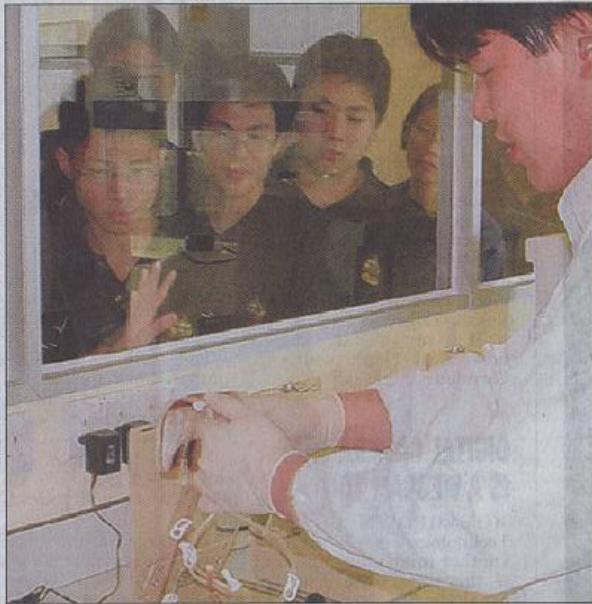


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First-hand look inside a stem cell lab



RI students watch attentively as biotechnologist Dave Oh processes a cord blood sample in the laboratory.

FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD Tay Rong En enjoys reading up on the life sciences, but never had the opportunity to see what goes on inside a laboratory that specialises in stem cell research.

But a school trip to biotechnology company CordLife last month offered the Raffles Institution (RI) student a chance to observe what he had been reading about since he was in Secondary 1.

The trip was such a success that the organisers are now planning to hold more such events.

During the visit, Rong En saw how cord blood containing stem cells was extracted from a human placenta.

The demonstration was part of a seminar organised by both CordLife and Genecet Biotechnologies, a life science educational services firm, to introduce stem cell research to students.

Rong En was one of 50 boys from RI who attended the session.

Another session was held for 50 girls from Raffles Girls' School.

Besides touring the 800sq ft laboratory, the youngsters listened to presentations by Genecet Biotechnologies chief executive officer Rosemary Tan as well as CordLife chief scientific officer Sheryl Vanderpoel and its chief technology officer Soren Bested.

The trio talked about the kind of research now being done on stem cells, the ethical issues encountered by researchers and how such research is able to contribute to medicine.

"It was an eye-opener. I learnt a lot from the presentations, especially about genetics and its applications to cure diseases," said Rong En.

Dr Tan, 33, who is also an immunology researcher, said: "The students were very hungry to know more."

"They were very interested in issues such as cloning and how it can be used in therapeutic medicine and reproduction."

For more information about future sessions, call Genecet Biotechnologies on 6297-6686 or e-mail enquiry@genecet.com



EDUCATION

High-Tech School Trip

RI students get to see how stem cells are extracted during school trip. **PAGE H7**

What it should have been

THE first paragraph of yesterday's Page 3 report, "Dot.com era bookstore chain closing shop", was transposed and appeared in the middle of the story instead of at the start.

In "It's all change for commuters, taxis and buses", we used a photograph of Bukit Panjang LRT in the graphic providing figures of the increase in traffic on the Sengkang LRT.

We are sorry for the errors.

In Monday's story, "First-hand look inside a stem cell lab", it was reported that the students saw how cord blood was extracted from a human placenta.

The company CordLife has clarified that the cord blood is collected at the hospital after birth and sent to the lab in a blood bag. The lab does not handle the placenta or cord.