

More local parents are choosing to store their baby's cord blood. A local blood bank revealed that numbers have risen from a handful of clients to 1000 in two short years. Chew Hui Min reports:

A baby's cord blood contains precious stem cells. Just 2 years ago, 45 diseases, including leukaemia, certain immune system disorders, cancer etc can be treated using stem cells. Now, the number has increased to 72 diseases.

Local researchers and scientists are increasing their pace in finding more treatments using stem cells.

Soren Bested, Chief Technology Officer:

“The reason why people store cord blood is because the so-called Haematopoietic Stem Cells. The Haematopoietic Stem Cells are the stem cells that make up our bone marrow. Cord blood as such, becomes a viable source of stem cells for what was before a bone marrow transplant. It's called a cord blood transplant.”

A private cord blood bank's target audiences are more personalized. The parents paid an initial fee for collection and processing, and a yearly storage thereafter. After which, they can take the cord blood unit out in future and use it for treatment purposes.

The cord blood unit can be used by the baby or its family members.

Client:

“If one unfortunate day, someone in my family or my baby is diagnosed with certain diseases, and treatment using stem cells is possible, this will be a good way to safeguard my family's future.”

Cord blood stem cells need to be processed before storing it cryogenically at -196°C , until the day it is taken out when needed for treatment.

The End. Interview with Channel 8 News, 20 Aug 03.