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Coriell Institute Receives \$27M for Human Genetics Biobank and New Stem Cell Laboratory

CAMDEN, N.J. — Following a nationwide competition, the Coriell Institute for Medical Research today announced its receipt of a five-year, \$27 million National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) Human Genetic Cell Repository award through the National Institutes of Health.

This contract will allow Coriell to introduce a powerful type of stem cell called induced pluripotent stem cells, or iPS cells, into the Repository. Produced by genetically reprogramming specialized cell types, such as skin cells, iPS cells share the ability of embryonic stem cells to turn into any of the 200 cell types in the human body without the use of an embryo. iPS cells, therefore, hold great promise for the future of disease treatment.

“This is the perfect opportunity to incorporate a revolutionary technology into the study of rare human disorders with the hope of furthering researchers’ understanding of disease development,” said Coriell President and CEO, Michael F. Christman, Ph.D. “We see the introduction of iPS cells into this collection as critical because of their vast potential for therapeutic use and regenerative medicine.”

Coriell’s addition of iPS cell technology will greatly enhance the extensive collections within the repository, providing scientists with new materials for disease research and discovery. The availability of iPS cell lines from various rare and common disease states, as well as from various populations, will open the doors for pre-clinical research studies. “One will be able to screen potential drugs using iPS cells created from individuals with diseases, such as cystic fibrosis, to see which drugs alleviate the problems caused by the disease,” said Margaret Keller, Ph.D., senior director of the Stem Cell Biobank at Coriell.

Another initiative being pursued at Coriell through the NIGMS contract is the collection of samples from individuals born with isolated congenital heart defects. In the United States, approximately 40,000 babies are born each year with some type of congenital heart defect, which is the leading cause of infant death. Cell lines and DNAs from affected individuals will be made available to researchers in hopes that the underlying causes of these heart defects can be discovered.

The Human Genetic Cell Repository was established by NIGMS in 1972 to collect cell samples from patients with genetic disorders and to establish and distribute cell lines derived from these samples to researchers around the world. The collection currently contains more than 10,000 extensively characterized cell lines and DNAs – representing more than 1,000 disorders – and has allowed scientists to advance the understanding of many rare diseases, such as Huntington’s disease and cystic fibrosis.

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About Coriell

Coriell Institute for Medical Research (www.coriell.org) is an internationally known, non-profit, biomedical research institution headquartered in Camden, NJ, contiguous with the Cooper University Hospital Health Sciences Campus. Founded in 1953, Coriell is the world's leading biobank resource for biological materials and home of the Coriell Personalized Medicine Collaborative[®] (CPMC[®]) research study, a forward-looking project aimed at understanding the utility of genome-informed medicine and identifying genetic variants associated with common complex disease and variation in drug response (<http://cpmc.coriell.org>).

About NIH & NIGMS

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) includes 27 Institutes and Centers and is a component of the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services. It's the primary Federal agency for conducting and supporting basic, clinical and translational medical research, and investigates the causes, treatments and cures for common and rare diseases.

NIGMS, part of NIH, supports basic research to increase our understanding of life processes and lay the foundation for advances in disease diagnosis, treatment and prevention. For more information, visit <http://www.nih.gov> and <http://www.nigms.nih.gov>.