

More US clinics offering stem cell therapy, but is it safe?

Plastic surgeons, other doctors and naturopaths at more than 100 clinics round the country are charging thousands of dollars for a controversial procedure called stem cell therapy to treat a range of disorders, including neurological diseases like multiple sclerosis and Parkinson's.

The procedure has angered many neurologists and prominent researchers who say these doctors are preying on vulnerable people and capitalizing on the huge but still unrealized potential of stem cell research, which they say is years away from producing an approved treatment for neurological diseases.

"Peddling snake oil in the guise of stem cell therapies is really a threat to legitimate research," said Dr. George Daley, director of the Stem Cell Transplantation Program at Boston Children's Hospital, past president of the International Society for Stem Cell Research and a professor at Harvard Medical School.

"Finding cures is hard, it takes sometimes decades, it's extremely expensive and it's not something that we can just wish and hope for," he said. "It can only be achieved through very, very hard work."

The stem cell therapy usually involves using liposuction to extract a patient's fat before separating out the stem cells using a centrifuge. The stem cells are then injected into the patient's blood stream the same day intravenously. Prices for this and similar treatments range from \$6,000 to \$20,000 per session.

The treatments have been popular in Europe and Asia for years, but until recently were unavailable in this country. But in the past few years, stem cell therapy clinics have cropped up in the U.S., and their numbers are increasing due to the franchise-like expansion of groups like the California-based Cell Surgical Network.

Read full original article: [Costly, Unproven Stem Cell Therapy for Neurological Disorders Questioned](#)