

Pioneering stem cell treatment may help patients with spinal-cord injury

A company that stepped in to salvage the first-ever medical use of human embryonic stem cells says it has encouraging results in patients with spinal-cord injury.

[Asterias Biotherapeutics](#)...will present data it says shows some gains of movement and sensation in five patients with spinal injuries who received injections of nervous system cells.

The company's technology is notable because of its link to the original discovery of human embryonic stem cells nearly 20 years ago.

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[Jane Lebkowski](#), chief scientific officer of Asterias, says the company thinks injecting such support cells into the spinal column can limit or reverse nerve damage, although not by directly growing new nerves. Based on animal studies, the company believes the cells prevent existing nerves from dying. "We want to show we can get neurological improvement," she says.

Some remain skeptical of stem-cell therapies. [Neurologist] [Keith Tansey](#)...says because cell transplants are still poorly understood, injecting them into spinal-cord injuries is "a Hail Mary—just throw it in there and hope it works."

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [After Setbacks, a Pioneering Stem-Cell Technology Is Back in Human Trials](#)