

Hype versus hope: Deciphering news about stem cell breakthroughs

For many people suffering from disabling conditions, such as Parkinson's disease, spinal injury and paralysis, heart disease, and even cancer, announcements in the press around breakthroughs in stem cell research undoubtedly bring hope.

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Keeping the balance between hope and hype is a difficult one, particularly when there are vulnerable and suffering people relying on the hope medical research offers. As Australian of the Year, Emeritus Professor Alan Mackay-Sim, stated in [his acceptance speech](#), there are now many clinical trials being performed in Australia and around the globe, to determine whether the delivery of certain types of cells, including some grown from stem cells, into the spinal column can allow patients with spinal cord injury to regain function.

For these individuals, even a small gain of function...is a major advance. However, as yet there is no "stem cell" silver bullet.

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And stem cells that have shown promise can also cause complications. It was also reported a [paraplegic woman developed a growth](#) in her spine many years after an unsuccessful spinal stem cell treatment...Hence, more research to test these and other types of cells in well-run clinical trials is required to move from anecdote to safe and effective therapies.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [The future of stem cells: tackling hype versus hope](#)