Information on the project

EpiStem is a collaborative project to guide and investigate the potential for HIV cure in HIV-infected patients requiring allogeneic stem cell transplantation for hematological disorders.

The EpiStem consortium consists of hematologists with extensive experience in allogeneic SCT procedures in HIV-infected patients, along with infectious disease specialists, virologists and immunologists with expertise in the field of HIV-1 tropism, innate and adaptive immunity, pharmacology, reservoirs and cure. EpiStem has built an inventory in European blood banks of CCR5Δ32/32 or heterozygous (cord)blood donors. The experts are available for guidance in donor search and CCR5 screening, ethical regulations, the SCT procedure, sampling procedures and in depth investigations to study HIV persistence.

Clinicians of HIV infected patients who require an SCT may register their patient in the EpiStem observational cohort. We collect clinical information and virological and immunological characteristics of a variety of samples taken before and after SCT according to an advanced monitoring and sampling strategy.

Mission

EpiStem aims to better understand the implications of stem cell transplantation in the control and eradication of HIV.

Sponsoring

EpiStem is sponsored by amfAR Research Consortium on HIV Eradication (ARCHE), a program from The Foundation for AIDS Research (amfAR)

Long term goals

We analyze over time the viral reservoirs and the immune reconstitution within the patients included in EpiStem. The knowledge as gathered in EpiStem will provide in-depth insight in the viral reservoirs and biological determinants of cure essential for HIV eradication strategies.

Principal Investigators:

Javier Martinez-Picado & Annemarie Wensing

Investigators:

Gero Hütter
Jürgen Kuball
Jose Diez-Martín
Monique Nijhuis
Vanderson Rocha
Asier Sáez-Cirión
Julian Schulze zur Wiesch

Researchers/project management:

Pascual Balsalobre Lopez
Kobus Bosman
Judith Dalmau
Johanna Eberhard
Antoinette van Kessel
Mi Kwon
María Salgado
Arjen Stam
Scientific Advisors:
Koen van Besien
Jan van Lunzen

EpiStem Participants

Belgium
Linos Vandekerckhove, Marie-Angélique de Scheerder, Eva Steel (University of Ghent)

Canada
Lisa Barrett, Sharon Oldford, Nate Stepner, Marina Turner (NSHA/Dalhousie University, Halifax)

Germany
Dieter Häussinger, Guido Kobbe, Björn Jensen (University Hospital Düsseldorf)
Rolf Kaiser, Elena Knops (University of Cologne)

Italy
Alessandra Bandera, Antonio Muscatello and Dr. Alessandro Soria (Infectious Diseases Unit, San Gerardo Hospital, Monza, Italy).

Netherlands
Lodewijk Brosens, Anke Bruns, Pauline Ellerbroek, Erik van Maarseveen (University Medical Center Utrecht), Jan van der Meer, Sacha Zeerleder (Academisch Medisch Centrum Amsterdam)

Spain
Ildefonso Espigado (University Hospital Virgen del Rocío, Seville)

United Kingdom
Kavita Raj, Fabio Cruciani, Varun Mehra, Carmel Rice, (Kings College Hospital, London)
Angela Bailey (Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust, London), Waseem Qasim (Institute of Child Health & Great Ormond Street Hospital, London)

More information:
www.epistem-project.org
Antoinet van Kessel, epistem@umcutrecht.nl