

## Brazil Earmarks US\$ 1.8 Million for Stem Cell Research

Contributed by Valtemir Rodrigues  
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Following the approval of the Biosecurity Law last week, the Brazilian government announced that it will make US\$ 1.8 million (5 million reais) available for stem cell research.

The official regulations for obtaining these funds will be published on March 29. The resources will be used for research to be conducted over the next two years.

In an interview on National Radio, Carla Rodrigues, a specialist in the Department of Science and Technology of the Ministry of Health, informed that all research groups are eligible to compete for these funds.

"All we are soliciting initially is prior experience in the pre-clinical or clinical area," she stated.

The groups will have to demonstrate infrastructure, technical and scientific capacity, and preliminary results on the topic of the research project.

Once the requirements have been met, the groups and hospitals engaged in research training will compete with one another to receive the programmed financial incentives.

Rodrigues underscores that the investment will contribute to increasing research in the area of cell therapy, strengthen this activity in the country and the world, and benefit public health agencies by making more advanced technologies available.

According to Rodrigues, the Ministry of Health has already taken some initiatives in this area.

She said that the Blood Bank of Umbilical Cords and Placentas was created last year to publish research based on material derived from umbilical cord blood, a source of stem cells.

"Other initiatives are related to the utilization of bone marrow stem cells in cases of the process referred to as cell therapy in the treatment of heart disease, which is also getting started now with a total funding of around US\$ 4.8 million (13 million reais)," she pointed out.

Translation: David Silberstein  
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