

## Brazil's Giant Stem Cell Study Gets Wider

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The clinical phase of the world's most extensive study of stem cell treatment of heart patients will get underway today in the state of Paraná, in southern Brazil.

Two patients who are victims of chronic dilated cardiac muscle disorder will be submitted to bone marrow puncture to remove cells from the core of the pelvis.

The procedures will be performed at the Curitiba Mercy Hospital, which is affiliated with the Pontifical Catholic University of Paraná.

1,200 volunteers from around the country are participating in the study. 33 institutions in nine states and the Federal District are involved in the research on adult stem cells in the treatment of serious heart disorders.

The clinical phase was initiated simultaneously in the states of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Bahia, on June 10.

Experimental medical procedures in patients with serious heart problems have begun at three Brazilian hospitals in mid-June: the National Heart Institute of Laranjeiras in Rio de Janeiro (Instituto Nacional de Cardiologia de Laranjeiras) (INCL), the Heart Institute (Instituto do Coração) (Incor), in São Paulo, and the Hospital Santa Isabel, in Salvador.

The effort is sponsored by the Ministry of Health and will eventually involve 33 hospitals in nine states and the Distrito Federal.

Volunteer patients will undergo the experimental procedures in a nationwide medical trial that will seek to ascertain the effectiveness of stem cell treatment.

The trial is presently the biggest of its kind in the world. Specific targets of the treatment are heart attack victims and people with cardiopathies, such as chronic coronary diseases, as well as Chagas disease.

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