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PRESS RELEASE

Transplant patients: life with a less intensive daily drug routine, feeling better and with less fear of organ rejection.

EU cell therapy consortium striving to improve overall life quality for transplant recipients.

Regensburg, May XX, 2011: Scientists from Germany, France, Italy, United Kingdom, and the USA are collaborating on a new large-scale European Community-funded project aimed at improving treatment and the overall quality of life for kidney transplant patients. The goal of the project is to develop a novel type of cell therapy that will reduce a life-long dependency on immune suppressing drugs that are often associated with undesirable side effects and can limit the patient's daily routine.

The focus of the ONE Study is to improve the overall treatment outcome for kidney transplant patients. Even though kidney transplant procedures and therapy have become relatively routine, the long-term success rate has been rather disappointing. In order to prevent recipient organ rejection, a patient must take a daily regime of strong medication that suppresses the body's immune system. Since the human body must constantly defend itself against intruders such as bacteria, viruses, potential cancer cells, as well as any tissue that is not its own, suppressing the immune system results in transplant patients running a higher risk of developing infections and cancer. In addition, these immune suppression drugs can cause undesirable side effects for the patient such as high blood pressure, diabetes, problems with metabolism, kidney damage and so on. Finally, where drug therapy is successful in suppressing organ rejection, after about 10 to 12 years these drug side effects, along with the body's reaction to donor tissue, can both potentially lead to loss of transplanted organ function.

The *ONE Study* aims to produce immune cells compatible with the patient's body that will naturally suppress the body's immune response against the transplanted organ. The cells, which are introduced at the beginning of the transplantation procedure, would result in a significant reduction in the use of immune suppression drugs, thus reducing not only potential side effects and the risk of malignancy, but also the cost of health care and ensure an overall improvement in patient quality of life. Another aspect of a more

targeted and effective immune suppression therapy would be that the transplant organ would last longer and function better. A donor organ that lasts longer would be a welcome relief in times where donor organs are still scarce.

The Kick-off meeting for the ONE Study took place in Brussels during April 2011. The ONE Study consortium is presently made up of thirteen partners, eight of which are academic institutions and five are companies that support research. Five countries are represented: France, Italy, Germany, The United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The European Community contributes 11 million Euros to the *ONE Study* project and the consortium donates another 4 million Euros in time and resources. The project was planned and is coordinated by Prof. Edward K. Geissler, from the Department of Surgery (Director, Prof. Dr. Hans J. Schlitt) at the University Hospital Regensburg. The project has also recruited many important distinguished and well-recognized researchers and transplant experts from all over the world. Prof. Geissler is excited about the possibilities; "The EU funding gives us a great opportunity to use the emerging knowledge from expert researchers in cell therapy to reduce the present need for immunosuppressive drugs in transplant recipients." For more information, please visit the *ONE Study* website at "www.onestudy.org".