

SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

Media contact: Heather Stieglitz
(214) 648-3404
or e-mail: heather.stieglitz@email.swmed.edu

UT SOUTHWESTERN ESTABLISHES BONE-MARROW TRANSPLANTATION PROGRAM

DALLAS — November 4, 1998 — UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas has inaugurated a new bone-marrow transplantation program, which will provide potentially life-saving therapies to patients with some forms of cancer.

Dr. Robert Collins, a specialist in hematology-oncology, will head the UT Southwestern Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center's new program. Collins, who joined the UT Southwestern faculty in September, expects to have the program ready to do the first bone-marrow transplant late this year.

"We are pleased to have someone with Dr. Collins' experience develop and direct the new bone-marrow transplant program," said Dr. Richard Gaynor, interim director of the Harold C. Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center. "Dr. Collins is internationally known for his studies on donor lymphocyte infusions, and he is one of the finest clinical transplanters in the country."

Bone-marrow transplants can benefit patients with leukemia, lymphoma, myeloma or aplastic anemia. Patients with other types of cancers such as breast cancer, ovarian cancer, advanced testicular cancer, sarcoma and low-grade lymphoma also are sometimes treated with bone-marrow transplants.

"UT Southwestern is a great place with real opportunity for interaction between clinicians and basic scientists," said Collins, who came to UT Southwestern from Baylor University Medical Center, where he was assistant director of bone-marrow transplantation for nine years. "Many basic scientists here are interested in clinical transplantation. Together we plan to build a framework where we can introduce that basic research into the clinical arena, thereby bringing the latest technology to the patient in a very timely fashion."

In a bone-marrow transplant, the patient is treated with very high doses of chemotherapy,

(MORE)

PROGRAM – 2

with or without radiation, to destroy cancer cells. This process also destroys the bone marrow, which then is replaced with healthy marrow cells obtained either from the patient beforehand (autologous) or from a healthy donor (allogeneic); the donated bone-marrow cells grow and repopulate the patient's blood cells. The procedure can require extensive hospitalization and can be risky.

Certain genetic diseases of the blood (e.g. thalassemia, sickle cell disease, severe combined immunodeficiency, among others) also are sometimes treated with bone-marrow transplants.

Bone-marrow transplantation methods are improving as scientists learn more about the immune system. When the procedure was developed 30 years ago, the intricacies of the immune system were largely unknown. Subsequent research has enabled today's clinicians to better control the toxicity of this procedure. Collins hopes to continue improving transplantation techniques through collaboration with UT Southwestern's basic scientists.

"We are fortunate to be able to bring to UT Southwestern a physician with the qualities of Dr. Collins," said Dr. Willis Maddrey, executive vice president for clinical affairs. "He will offer the highest level of medical care to UT Southwestern cancer patients."

A native of Missouri, Collins received his medical degree and bachelor's degree from the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine in a combined double-degree program. After his internship and residency at Baylor University Medical Center, he completed a fellowship in hematology-oncology at the University of California, Los Angeles, Medical Center.

###

This news release is available on our World Wide Web home page at
http://www.swmed.edu/home_pages/news/

To automatically receive news releases from UT Southwestern via e-mail, send a message to
UTSWNEWS-REQUEST@listserv.swmed.edu. Leave the subject line blank and in the text box, type SUB UTSWNEWS