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Major Summit Places McLean Hospital and Dalhousie University at Forefront of Stem Cell Research and New Clinical Trials

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Belmont, MA - Two leaders in stem cell biology and cell transplantation research and technology-[the Center for Neuroregeneration Research \(CNR\)](#) at McLean Hospital, an affiliate of Harvard Medical School, and [the Brain Repair Centre \(BRC\)](#) at Queen Elisabeth II Hospital and Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia-will come together on October 7, 2008, at McLean and Harvard University to share their expertise, clinical results, and research strategies, for example, using cells to treat neurological diseases and brain injuries. The symposium, the result of an agreement between the two institutions to collaborate on brain research repair, is the first time two major brain research centers have joined forces on this scale.

According to Professor Ole Isacson, MD, director for the Center for Neuroregeneration Research, the partnership between the two centers could lead to innovations such as new cell transplantation technologies and clinical applications that will improve the treatment of neurological diseases.

"These two teams-at CNR and at BRC-have asked the most challenging questions to date on how we can effectively isolate cells and use stem cell to treat diseases such as Parkinson's, and to restore damaged nerve cells. Restorative neurology and neuroscience are key strengths of each of these institutions," he said.

By coming together for the summit, CNR and BRC will capitalize on this strength and bring their own expertise to the table-CNR's in cell transplantation research and technology, and BRC's in methodology and clinical application.

"Methodology matters," said Ivar Mendez, MD, PhD, chair of the Brain Repair Centre. "How we go from the science to the clinical application makes a difference in whether cell transplantation clinical trials are successful."

Together, the two teams plan to develop new collaborations in areas such as better stem cell based transplantation technologies-technologies that will be explored in depth during the October symposium.

"Our goal is to design new clinical trials as a preparation for future neuronal cell transplantation, a therapy we know can work in Parkinson patients. We have a great deal of new evidence showing that cell transplantation can be successful clinically. Our position is that, in the next 10 years, new methodologies will completely revolutionize how neurological and-potentially-neuropsychiatric diseases are treated," Isacson said.

BRC is unique in Canada, and is one of only four such centers worldwide. It is a collaboration of more than 100 researchers from Dalhousie University, Capital Health, the IWK Health Centre, and other institutions around the world. BRC researchers are working to find treatments and cures for diseases, disorders, and injuries of the brain and spinal cord.

The CNR is an academic research center at McLean Hospital that provides an innovative research environment for clinicians and scientists, training opportunities for students and post-doctoral fellows, and an advanced technical capacity used to investigate new discoveries relating to the neurosciences.

[U.S. News & World Report](#) consistently ranks McLean Hospital the nation's top psychiatric hospital. McLean is an affiliate of [Harvard Medical School](#) and [Massachusetts General Hospital](#), and a member of [Partners HealthCare](#). For more information about McLean Hospital, visit www.mclean.harvard.edu.

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