

Treatment For Scleroderma... An Incurable Disease

There is no cure for scleroderma, an autoimmune disease that hardens the skin and damages internal organs. Dr. Dipnarine Maharaj has developed an innovative nontoxic treatment that uses stem cell-mobilized bone marrow to reverse lethal scleroderma tissue damage.

Scientifically reviewed by: **Dr. Shanti Albani**, ND, Physician, in May 2022. Written by: Laurie Mathena.

Imagine living in a body that is turning to stone. Your skin becomes so tight to the bone that it can't be pinched. Your fingers, once nimble and dexterous, become frozen in a claw-like position. Your internal organs begin to function less efficiently, and you're faced with chronic heartburn, shortness of breath, fatigue, and much more.

These are all symptoms of an autoimmune disease called **scleroderma**. There is no known cause for scleroderma—and worse, no cure.

But for the 300,000 Americans living with this disease, hope is on the horizon. Life Extension Scientific Advisory Board member Dipnarine Maharaj, M.D., of the **South Florida Bone Marrow/Stem Cell Transplant Institute**, is making dramatic inroads into a disease that has otherwise baffled the medical community.

Dipnarine Maharaj, MD is a hematologist/oncologist with 37 years of clinical experience. Considered a pioneer in stem cell research, Dr. Maharaj has developed a **stem cell mobilizing treatment** that is producing impressive results and significant improvements in scleroderma patients.

This novel treatment utilizes a specialized protein that activates disease-fighting stem cells from the patient's bone marrow. In this way, the treatment regains the patient's control over their own immune system.

Dr. Maharaj believes this treatment could revolutionize not only the way we treat scleroderma—but many of the chronic diseases associated with aging.

What Is Scleroderma?

Scleroderma is an autoimmune disease characterized by hardening and tightening of the skin and connective tissues in the body. "Sclero" is the Greek word for *hard*, and "derma" means *skin*. But don't let the name fool you. While hardening of the skin may be the most visible sign of the disease, it can also affect internal organs such as the esophagus, gastrointestinal tract, lungs, kidneys, and heart.

Excess collagen builds up in the skin or organs and causes extreme tightness, pain, and organ complications. As a result, the tissues or organs involved become hard and function less efficiently.

There is currently no cure for this debilitating disease. Since this is an autoimmune disorder (meaning the immune system attacks the person's own body), doctors often prescribe immunosuppressive drugs to help reduce the severity of the condition. These drugs can work in the short term, but over time, they stop working.

The only other option for these patients is to take drugs to treat the individual symptoms caused by the disease, such as taking antacids for heartburn, etc.

Dr. Maharaj's novel approach to scleroderma is the first treatment designed to fight scleroderma at its root.

Stem Cell Mobilization Protocol

Dr. Maharaj performs stem cell transplants at the South Florida Bone Marrow/Stem Cell Transplant Institute. A stem cell transplant involves taking stem cells from the patient's own bone marrow, giving them chemotherapy

that wipes out their bone marrow immune system, and then reinjecting the stem cells back into the patient in order to restore bone marrow and immune function.

In addition to the chemo, patients are given an FDA-approved protein to help them recover their blood count or to be used as a stem cell mobilizing agent. While it can be lifesaving, a stem cell transplant is a long process that is very taxing on patients who are already very sick.

Over the years, as he treated cancer patients, Dr. Maharaj discovered something remarkable. In the process of using this treatment for cancer patients, he found that it was leading to extraordinary improvements in autoimmune diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus—and even scleroderma.

However, while stem cell transplants are often successful for cancer patients, they are too risky to use as a primary treatment for autoimmune diseases because the high-dose chemo can cause further damage to the organs.

That's when Dr. Maharaj had his lightbulb moment.

"Instead of using the high-dose chemo first, why not eliminate the chemo, and instead [use the protein alone] to utilize the ability of the stem cells to regenerate the immune system, repair inflammation, and repair skin and other organs," said Dr. Maharaj.

This process pioneered by Dr. Maharaj is called **stem cell mobilization**. Different from a stem cell *transplant*, stem cell *mobilization* doesn't use chemotherapy, and stem cells don't need to be removed from the body. Instead, the process involves using the specialized protein that works to release disease-fighting stem cells from the patient's own bone marrow.

In this way, you're mobilizing—or *activating*—the stem cells, instead of transplanting them. This would be a much less risky procedure, with no toxicity because instead of the wiping out the immune system, you're enhancing it.

"With my protocol, we are able to mobilize the patient's stem cells from the bone marrow into the blood," said Dr. Maharaj. "This allows those stem cells to go into areas where there is inflammation, or damage to the skin or organs, and repair it."

Now Dr. Maharaj's next step was to find pilot patients to use the protocol as a primary treatment for scleroderma.

That's when he met Gale.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Novel Stem Cell Treatment For Scleroderma

- Scleroderma is an incurable autoimmune disease characterized by hardening and tightening of the skin and connective tissues in the body. It can also affect internal organs such as esophagus, gastrointestinal tract, lungs, kidneys, and heart.
- It causes chronic heartburn, shortness of breath, fatigue, and much more.
- A novel treatment approach was developed by Dr. Dipnarine Maharaj. Called stem cell mobilization, the process uses a specialized protein that works to release disease-fighting stem cells from a patient's own bone marrow. The stem cells travel to inflamed areas to repair damage to skin or organs.
- Unlike a stem cell transplant, no chemotherapy is necessary; therefore, there is no toxicity. Instead of destroying the immune system, it is enhanced.
- Patients who have undergone the experimental treatment report dramatic results.

Gale's Story

When 59-year-old Gale Sylvester-De Mello first heard about Dr. Maharaj's treatment, she was at the end of her rope. She had suffered from scleroderma for 24 years and had traveled all over the country seeking new treatments—but nothing had worked, and her time was running out.

"My doctor didn't know what more to do," said Gale. "He told me I would have to start looking for hospice in the

not too distant future.”

Instead, Gale kept looking for a solution. That’s when she heard Dr. Maharaj as a guest speaker at the Southeast Florida Chapter of the Scleroderma Foundation. He was talking about his novel treatment called stem cell mobilization.

Everything he said made sense to her, Gale said, but there was just one catch: The treatment was experimental, and Dr. Maharaj offered no guarantees of success.

“We had no other option,” said Gale. “We had done everything conventional we could have done.”

That’s why Gale decided to move forward and become the pioneer scleroderma patient for Dr. Maharaj’s stem cell mobilization protocol.

After the six weeks of treatment, Gale’s results were nothing short of remarkable. Her immune function (as measured by natural killer T cell percentage) rose significantly from **10** to **27%**, putting her in the normal range (which is between 17 and 39). And most incredible of all, one of her most debilitating symptoms was almost completely reversed.

For nearly 30 years, she had been living with severe heartburn and nearly constant acid in her throat, forcing her to sleep propped up on three to four pillows and to take numerous medications. But beyond the pain and discomfort, she was only months away from needing a permanent feeding tube because of the damage done to her esophagus.

“My doctor told me he had never seen an endoscopy that looked like mine. He had never seen it get that bad that fast,” said Gale.

But all that changed after the stem cell mobilization protocol. When she had a follow-up endoscopy after undergoing the treatment, Gale’s doctor came in the room with tears in his eyes.

“I’ve never seen anything like this,” he told her. “Your esophagus is **99%** normal.”

As a result, Gale has decreased her heartburn meds from six to three, she no longer needs to sleep propped up, and she can finally enjoy food without the taste of acid in her throat.

The scleroderma had also caused tightening of the skin on her face, arms, and hands—all of which have become noticeably looser after the treatment. In addition, Gale is off of seven major medications, she’s sleeping better, has experienced a decrease in pain, and doesn’t experience as much brain fog.

“The stem cell mobilization treatment has given me my life back,” said Gale. “My quality of life was given back to me, where I had none before.”

Jessica’s Story

Four months after Gale started treatment, 27-year-old Jessica Massengale became the second scleroderma patient to undergo Dr. Maharaj’s stem cell mobilization protocol.

“My disease had progressed little by little,” said Jessica, “but it was at a point where I was really frightened at the direction the disease was taking me.”

Though she had only had the disease for seven years, she had developed tight skin from head to toe. The skin on her hands was so tight that they had curled into a permanent claw-like position, and she had developed painful ulcers on her knuckles because of lack of blood flow through the body.

Like Gale, Jessica also suffered from severe heartburn.

She had tried immunosuppressant drugs, but was forced to stop because of the side effects. And she had even tried a form of low-dose chemo, but it had little effect. Jessica was out of options.

“I didn’t want to be on medication,” said Jessica. “I wanted something that could heal me. I was drawn to Dr. Maharaj’s approach because his practice is to use the body to heal—that way it can continue to heal itself after treatment is over.”

Jessica has experienced numerous benefits as a result of the stem cell mobilization protocol. Her skin has

loosened up all over her body. Her mouth, which had gotten smaller due to the tightening of the skin, has increased by one inch. The skin on her shoulders used to feel like bricks, but has softened up completely. She was also able to stop taking Nexium altogether.

"I felt like someone was injecting life back in me," said Jessica. "I hadn't felt like that in so long."

Perhaps most exciting of all, her lung function had improved from **69** to **84%**! This is especially noteworthy considering lung failure is the number one way patients die from scleroderma. In addition, her heart results were **100%** normal.

Unfortunately, Jessica's worst complication—her hands—has not improved, and she is planning on undergoing a second round of treatment.

"I believe in it that much that I'm willing to do it again," said Jessica.

What's Next?

To date, Dr. Maharaj has treated five scleroderma patients. He has seen consistent results, and the patients have maintained their improvements. However, it's still very early in the process, and the patients will need to be followed for several years in order to determine long-term effects.

Currently, because the stem cell mobilization protocol is still considered experimental, it is not covered by insurance, making its \$65,000 price tag out of reach for many patients. In order to help this important procedure become standard of care—and accessible for the majority of scleroderma patients—the next step is to conduct a formal study.

Unfortunately, many scleroderma patients can't wait the five to 10 years a study would take to complete. So in the meantime, Dr. Maharaj is going to continue to provide this lifesaving treatment that many would say you can't put a price tag on.

SCLERODERMA STRONG

Dr. Dipnarine Maharaj and Gale Sylvester-DeMello.

The **stem cell mobilization protocol** is making a real difference in the lives of scleroderma patients. Unfortunately, its \$65,000 price tag—and the fact that it's not covered by insurance—puts it out of reach for many who are living with this disease.

Gale Sylvester-De Mello, the first patient to receive this pioneer therapy—knows firsthand

the sacrifices involved in paying out of pocket—but also knows it was worth every penny. That's why she and her husband, Tony, have started a 501c foundation called the Gale and Tony De Mello Scleroderma and Madelungs Foundation.

"There was no foundation for scleroderma where people could turn to for financial help," said Gale. "Our goal is to help cover the medical and practical costs not covered by medical insurance, such as lodging, food, gas, and wheelchairs."

Jessica Massengale, the second patient to receive the stem cell mobilization protocol, is helping fellow scleroderma patients in a different way.

"I try to empower patients because of what we go through," said Jessica. "We are a community of survivors who do not give up. It's not even part of our vocabulary."

She has a Facebook page that supports other patients

(www.facebook.com/MyJourneyWithSclerodermaByJessica), and has built a website that highlights the warriors who do battle with this disease every day—and that also provides critical information on Dr. Maharaj's treatment.

Both women are on a mission to make a difference in the lives of fellow scleroderma sufferers—and informing people about the stem cell mobilization protocol is part of that mission.

"The best thing Dr. Maharaj's treatment has done for me is that it has given us hope," said Gale. "Now we can

give hope to other people.”

For more information, visit: www.sclerodermastrong.org.

The Bigger Picture

The beauty of a technique that mobilizes the body’s own disease-fighters is that its benefits are not limited to scleroderma. Dr. Maharaj believes his stem cell mobilization protocol could also become a broader treatment for chronic disease.

“Chronic diseases occur on the backbone of inflammation and deterioration of the immune system,” said Dr. Maharaj. “What the stem cell mobilization protocol does is to reduce inflammation, repair the immune system, and help damaged tissues recover.”

Diseases that have a basis of inflammation—such as heart, lung, autoimmune, and neurological diseases—are all examples of diseases that could be helped by the stem cell mobilization protocol. And in fact, they already have. According to Dr. Maharaj, he’s seen improvements in patients with diabetes, Parkinson’s, Alzheimer’s, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis.

“My objective for the future is for us all to have health and wellness and to be free of diseases as we age,” said Dr. Maharaj. “My goal is to find solutions so our quality of life remains good well into our later years. That’s what we call healthy aging.”

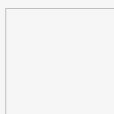
Summary

Scleroderma is an incurable disease that affects 300,000 Americans. This autoimmune disease not only causes hardening of the skin, it also affects internal organs, including lungs, kidneys, and heart.

Dipnarine Maharaj, MD is a hematologist/oncologist. His vast experience in doing stem cell transplants to treat leukemia patients led him to develop this novel stem cell mobilization approach that uses a specialized protein to release disease-fighting stem cells from a patient’s own bone marrow to suppress inflammation and repair the horrific damage inflicted by scleroderma, a current incurable disease.

The fact that conventional medical insurance will not cover this potential life saving therapy is a tragic example of a broken health care system that needs a radical overhaul.

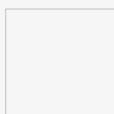
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