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Hong Kong, Sweden collaboration to advance mesenchymal stromal cell therapy for knee osteoarthritis

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Strengthening the bridge between academic research and scalable therapeutic development



The InnoHK Centre for Neuromusculoskeletal Restorative Medicine (CNRM), established by The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Sweden-based company Cellcolabs AB to establish a strategic international collaboration.

The collaboration is designed to directly support CNRM's upcoming Phase I/II clinical trial investigating mesenchymal stromal cell (MSC) therapy for knee osteoarthritis.

Knee osteoarthritis, a prevalent degenerative condition that erodes joint cartilage and hinders movement, is particularly common in older adults. Standard treatments encompass pain medications, physical therapy, lubricating injections, and surgical procedures. Allogeneic MSC therapy represents an innovative regenerative approach, using donor-derived cells injected into the joint to reduce inflammation, alleviate pain, and potentially restore damaged cartilage.

CNRM is supported by the InnoHK initiative of the Innovation and Technology Commission of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is dedicated to translating pioneering research in stem cells, tissue engineering and regenerative medicine into practical therapeutics. To accelerate this clinical translation, CNRM is partnering with Cellcolabs AB, a leading producer of high-quality, GMP-certified mesenchymal stromal cells (MSCs), based on over 25 years of research at medical university Karolinska Institutet. The MoU opens pathways for deeper collaboration, including potential multi-centre trials and long-term commercial partnerships.

Image caption- Professor Patrick Yung Shu-hang (right), Director of CNRM and Chairman of the Department of Orthopaedics and Traumatology in the Faculty of Medicine at CUHK and Petter Hallman, Acting CEO at Cellcolabs