

Blood stem cell discovery is announced

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Boston-area scientists say they've discovered a method that dramatically multiplies blood stem cells.

The discovery at the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research in Cambridge, Mass., could result in improved bone marrow transplants and making them available to more patients, the Boston Globe reported Monday.

Bone marrow transplants save the lives of thousands of cancer patients each year, but many people are denied treatment because the stem cells, which give the transplants their regenerative power, are not available.

The new technique, discovered in mouse experiments, reportedly uses a cocktail of growth factors to multiply the stem cells as much as thirty fold.

"This is a very significant step forward," Dr. Guy Sauvageau, who was not involved in the Whitehead work, told the Globe. He is scientific director of the Institute for Research in Immunology and Cancer in Montreal.

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