

Global Update

News in Brief

The Pulse on Polio

The Last Lap: The worldwide polio campaign has faced a fresh setback. Sixty-three cases from Yemen and 4 cases in Indonesia reported recently have sent alarm bells ringing. The cases in Yemen, many of them paralytic imply there must be more than 10,000 infections. That's because for every paralyzed case there are 200 odd infections. The strain in Yemen has originated from Nigeria, which had a major outbreak in 2003. The 2003 outbreak was because of a rumor that polio campaign was a secret US ploy to spread AIDS and infertility in Islamic countries. Now there may be a \$50 million shortfall of funds for the remaining year, which may cause authorities to stop vaccinations in disease free areas. This year for once Asia seems to be performing overall better and Africa is in deeper trouble (14 May *bmj.com* 2005; 330: 1106).

"Saviour siblings": The case of Raj and Shahana Hashmi of Britain is well known to all. They have a 6-year-old son Zain with B thalassemia. They have been trying for another baby whose tissue type would match Zain's to try stem cell or bone

marrow transplant. Another group "Comment on Reproductive Ethics" had filed a suit against this saying that the Human Embryology and Fertilisation Authority had no power to license the creation of a baby to save the life of another. Finally the Highest court in Britain has ruled that they have permission for preimplantation genetic diagnosis and tissue typing on embryos used in treatment for in vitro fertilization (*BMJ* 7 May 2005; 330: 1041).

First live donor islet cell transplant: A woman in Japan has been successfully been transplanted with islet cells from her mother. The first islet cell transplant was done in 2000 and around 100 odd patients have received this therapy so far. But they have all been cadaveric donors. About 10 ml of tissue was transplanted into the patient and the amount of tissue required was much lesser than in the usual cadaveric transplant. The recipient has been off insulin after 22 days of the surgery and has been doing well so far.

The operating team led by Shinichi Matsumoto of Kyoto University Hospital are planning 10 more surgeries this year (*www.nature.com*, 19 April 2005).

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