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## Local Chinese community initiates stem cell awareness drive

### 拯救生命 华人社区发动干细胞捐助登记活动

A stem cell donor registration drive was launched in Kitchener-Waterloo in June aimed at increasing the number of Chinese stem cell registrants, and specifically helping a 41-year-old Chinese (mother of a six-year-old boy) in Kitchener diagnosed with Acute Myeloid Leukemia urgently searching for an unrelated stem cell donor for transplant.

Canada's stem cell network is 82 per cent Caucasian and only 3 per cent is of Chinese heritage. With the likelihood of finding a match far greater within one's own ethnic group, more donors from diverse backgrounds are needed to sign up for the network.

The local drive was initiated by Li Li, a friend of the patient. "Initially, I registered myself as a donor. However, I realize just for one person to register, the chance for match is almost impossible, so the best way is to call for the Chinese community to come together to help her," said Li. "We need to call more people to join us to save her life."

With generous response from the local Chinese community and with support from OneMatch Stem Cell and Marrow Network under the Canadian Blood Services and OtherHalf Chinese Stem Cell Initiative, the drive was all set up in less than two weeks. 32 volunteers participated in the event, including a few from Toronto.

"The earlier we can find a match for this young mother, the earlier she can have a good chance to save her life," said Connie Lau from OtherHalf Chinese Stem Cell Initiative.

143 Chinese community members registered at the Kitchener campaign, which is one of a series of "Summer of Saving Lives 2010" across the Greater Toronto Area and nearby. DNA sample collection (oral swabs) is included at all of the drive events.

"People will come forward when they understand the donation procedure is very simple," said Lau. "Last year we had over 1000 people coming forward in five hours in our first drive. This year, we launched a national drive in Vancouver and in Toronto, and over 4000 people came forward in a few hours in each city."

Currently, there are about 20 Chinese patients needing stem cells transplants who are waiting for matched donors. Only 30 per cent of patients will find a match within their own family, while the other 70 per cent must depend on the generosity of unrelated donors.

一名居于基奇纳、育有6岁男童的41岁华裔母亲被诊断出患有急性骨髓性白血病，急需配对的无血缘关系干细胞作移植使用。为了帮助这位母亲早日找到合适的配对干细胞，本地华人社区于6月中旬发动了“拯救生



命—干细胞捐赠登记活动”，争取更多华人登记加入干细胞捐赠者资料库。

在加拿大的干细胞网络中，82%的登记者为白种人，华裔只占3%。由于患者从族裔社群中寻获合适干细胞捐赠者的机率最高，因此，干细胞网络需要更多不同族裔背景的登记者，以提高成功配对的机率。

此次活动由患者的朋友李丽发起。“起初，我只是自己作了登记，但是，只凭一己之力，只多我一人登记，成功配对的机率是微乎其微。最好的方法就是呼吁整个华人社区一同参与！”李丽说，“我们需要更多人来帮助她挽救生命！”

在本地华人社区的积极响应和加拿大血液中心的OneMatch干细胞及骨髓网络与OtherHalf加华干细胞协会的大力支持下，整个活动在两周内筹备完毕。活动现场有32名志愿者服务，其中包括来自多伦多的志愿者。

“尽早我们能为这位年轻母亲寻获合适的配对细胞，她重获生命的机会就越大。”来自加华干细胞协会的刘马筱云说。

有143名华人当天登记加入干细胞捐赠者资料库。此次活动系跨越大多伦多及周边地区的“夏日拯救生命2010”系列活行动之一。所有活动地点都举行即场登记及收集口腔内壁细胞供分析DNA使用。

“当了解到捐赠程序简单且无痛苦后，很多热心人士都会自愿登记。”刘马筱云说，“在去年的首次活动中，短短5小时就有逾1000人登记。今年我们在温哥华和多伦多发动了全国性行动，每个城市在几小时内都有逾4000人登记。”

目前约有20名华裔患者急需适合的干细胞作移植之用。只有30%的患者可以透过直系亲属寻获配对的干细胞，其余70%必须依赖无血缘关系的配对捐赠者提供所需的干细胞。

For more information, visit [www.onematch.ca](http://www.onematch.ca) and [www.chinesestemcell.ca](http://www.chinesestemcell.ca). 更多资料，请访问以上网站。