

# More research need to back up stem-cell therapy—Ogbogu

STEM-CELLS • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Lau added that the safety and well-being of the patients should be researchers' top priority at this point and time.

"I can't conclude on the motives of the companies, but most of the therapies that we have seen so far have been fairly pricey," Lau said.

He explained that based on four websites that advertised stem-cell treatment of diseases, the average cost was \$24 000. However, they also came across several other sites advertising treatment for general wellness and for slowing the effects of aging.

Even with the high price of stem-cell therapy, many people are flocking towards the clinics offering the service, due to the fact that the cures they're claiming are for people in

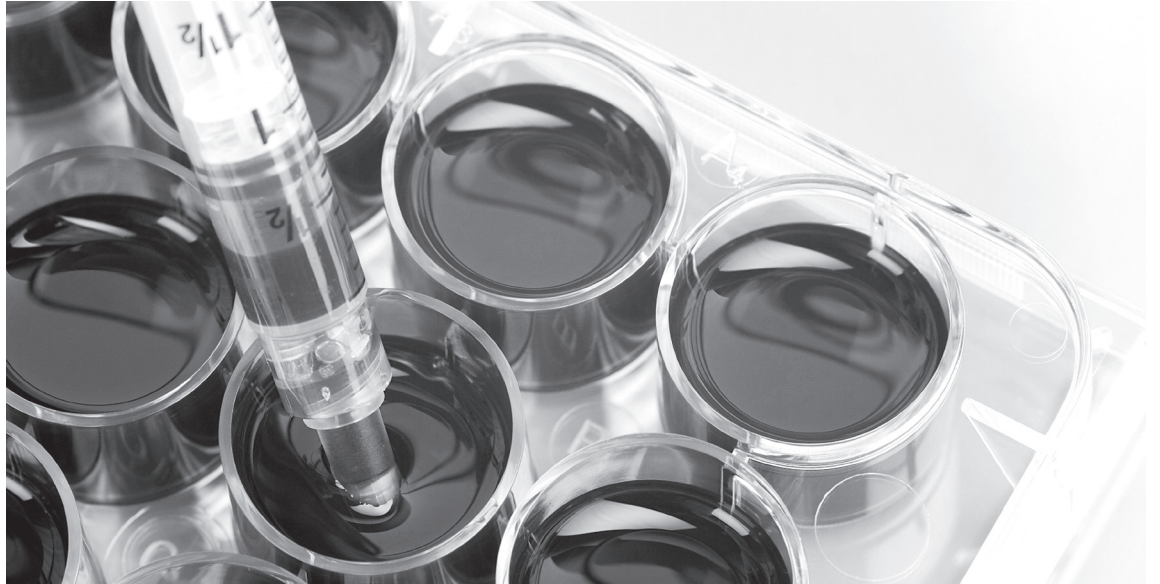
desperate conditions.

"Everybody talks about the promise of stem cell research and the huge potential it may have to revolutionize medicine, but there is a great need to proceed with caution and to realize that scientists are far from getting this ready for the market," Ogbogu cautioned.

"It's purely speculative to know what it may lead to, and it's at a stage [where] it's not even remotely ready for routine administration. It's not ready at all for prime time."

Lau also advises that people look for large, randomized clinical trials to see how things are substantiated and to make sure that the therapy providers are understating risks involved with the procedure.

"We need to make sure that the accounts of the benefits being offered are not too good to be true."



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**UNCERTAINTY IN A TEST TUBE** Researchers say overseas clinics advertising stem-cell therapy might not be holy grails.

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