

# Isolation and comparative analysis of potential stem/progenitor cells from different regions of human umbilical cord.

[Beeravolu N](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Khan I](#)<sup>2</sup>, [McKee C](#)<sup>1</sup>, [Dinda S](#)<sup>3</sup>, [Thibodeau B](#)<sup>4</sup>, [Wilson G](#)<sup>5</sup>, [Perez-Cruet M](#)<sup>5</sup>, [Bahado-Singh R](#)<sup>4</sup>, [Chaudhry GR](#)<sup>6</sup>.

## Author information

1

Department of Biological Sciences, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309, USA; OU-WB Institute for Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309, USA.

2

Department of Biological Sciences, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309, USA; OU-WB Institute for Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309, USA; Dr. Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research, University of Karachi, Pakistan.

3

School of Health Sciences, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309, USA.

4

Beaumont Health System, Royal Oak, MI 48073, USA.

5

OU-WB Institute for Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309, USA; Beaumont Health System, Royal Oak, MI 48073, USA.

6

Department of Biological Sciences, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309, USA; OU-WB Institute for Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine, Oakland University, Rochester, MI 48309, USA. Electronic address: [chaudhry@oakland.edu](mailto:chaudhry@oakland.edu).

## **Abstract**

Human umbilical cord (hUC) blood and tissue are non-invasive sources of potential stem/progenitor cells with similar cell surface properties as bone marrow stromal cells (BMSCs). While they are limited in cord blood, they may be more abundant in hUC. However, the hUC is an anatomically complex organ and the potential of cells in various sites of the hUC has not been fully explored. We dissected the hUC into its discrete sites and isolated hUC cells from the cord placenta junction (CPJ), cord tissue (CT), and Wharton's jelly (WJ). Isolated cells displayed fibroblastoid morphology, and expressed CD29, CD44, CD73, CD90, and CD105, and showed evidence of differentiation into multiple lineages in vitro. They also expressed low levels of pluripotency genes, OCT4, NANOG, SOX2 and KLF4. Passaging markedly affected cell proliferation with concomitant decreases in the expression of pluripotency and other markers, and an increase in chondrogenic markers. Microarray analysis further revealed the differences in the gene expression of CPJ-, CT- and WJ-hUC cells. Five coding and five lncRNA genes were differentially expressed in low vs. high passage hUC cells. Only MAEL was expressed at high levels in both low and high passage CPJ-hUC cells. They displayed a greater proliferation limit and a higher degree of multi-lineage differentiation in vitro and warrant further investigation to determine their full differentiation capacity, and therapeutic and regenerative medicine potential.

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**KEYWORDS:**

Differentiation; Peri-natal stem/progenitor cells; Placenta; Proliferation; Umbilical cord