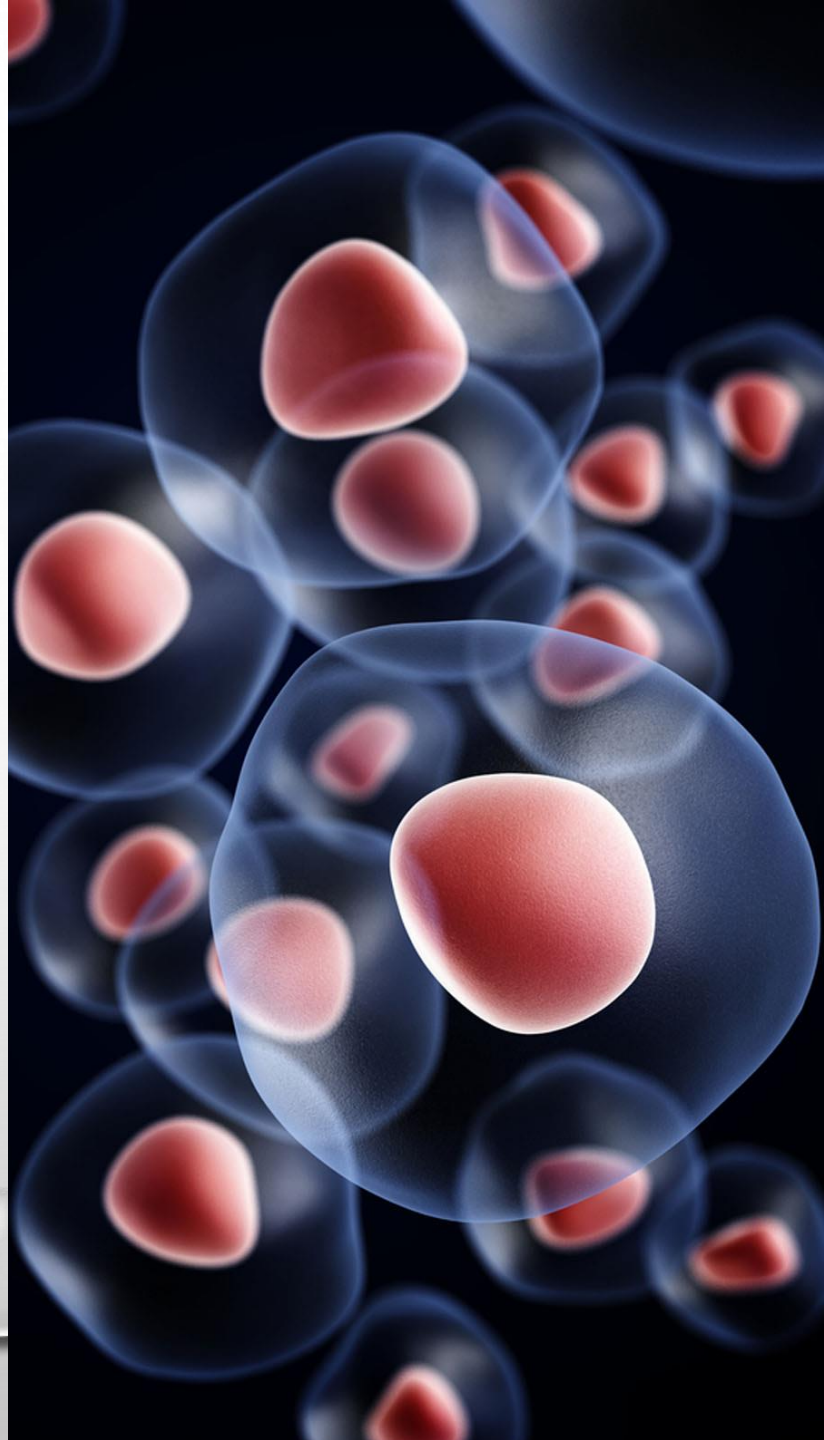
Stem Cells: The New Therapeutics Era

Dr. Diala Abu-Hassan, DDS, PhD

School of Medicine

dr.abuhassand@gmail.com

Central Nervous System

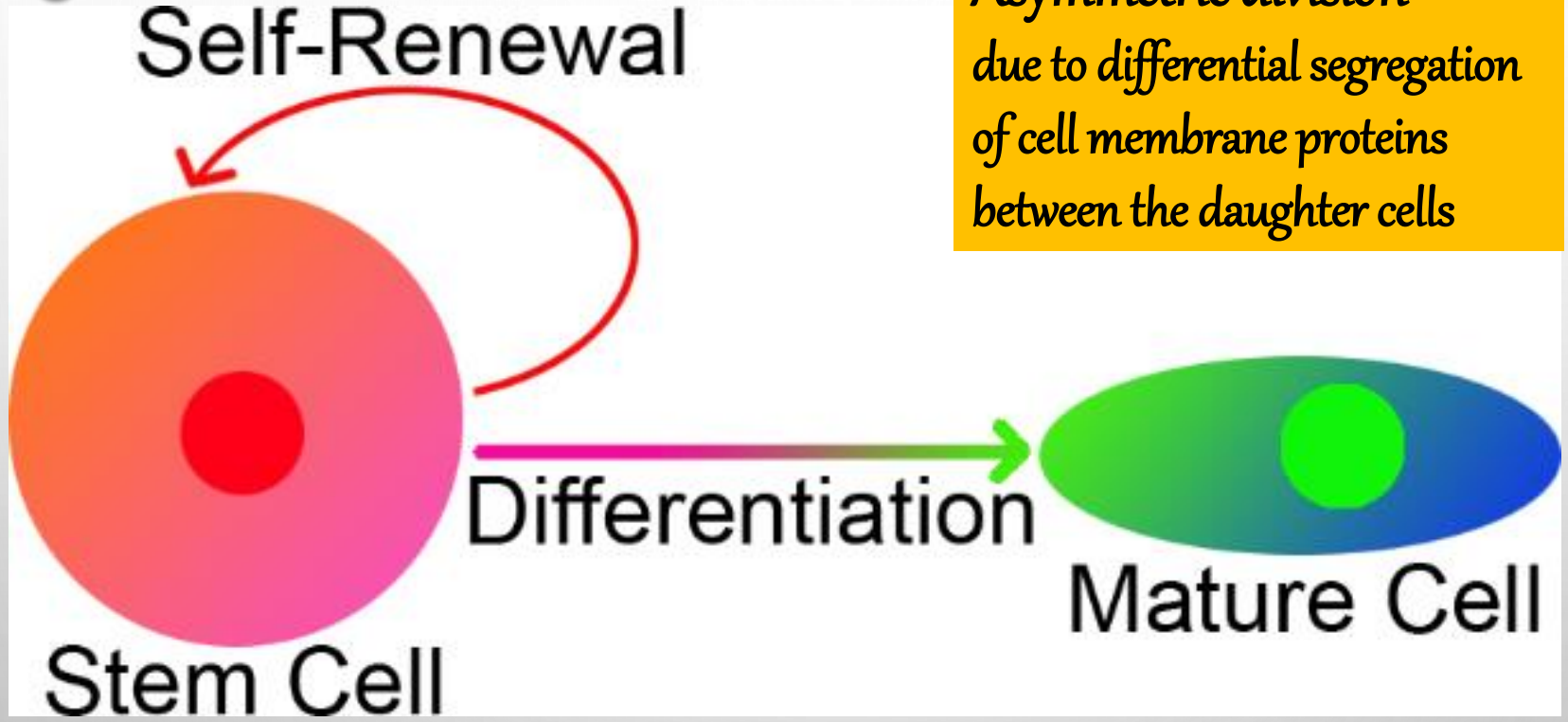


What do you know about stem cells?

What are stem cells?

- Are primal cells common to all multicellular organisms that retain the ability to **renew** themselves through cell division and can be **differentiated** into a wide range of specialized cell types.
- All stem cells are unspecialized (**undifferentiated**) cells that are of the same family type (**lineage**).

Differentiation vs self renewal

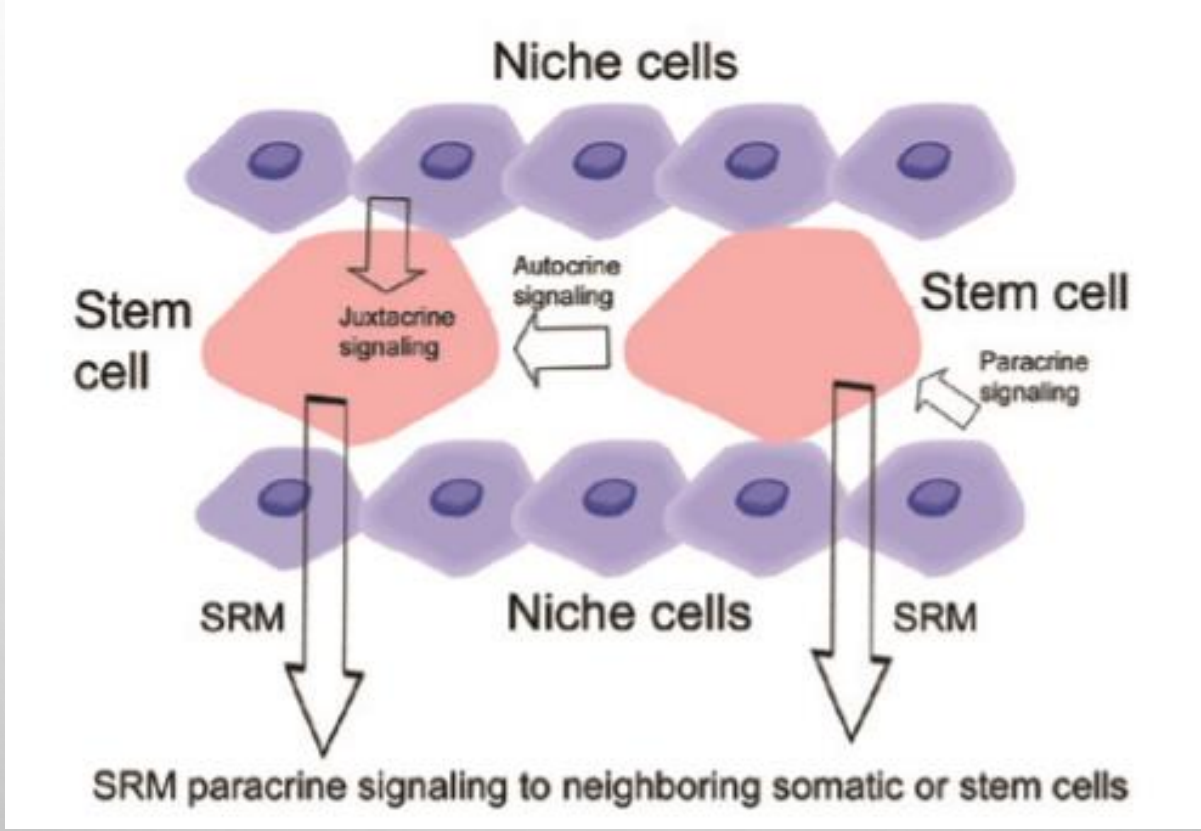


Asymmetric division
due to differential segregation of cell membrane proteins between the daughter cells

Self-renewal: The ability to go through numerous cycles of cell division while maintaining the undifferentiated state.

Stem cell niche

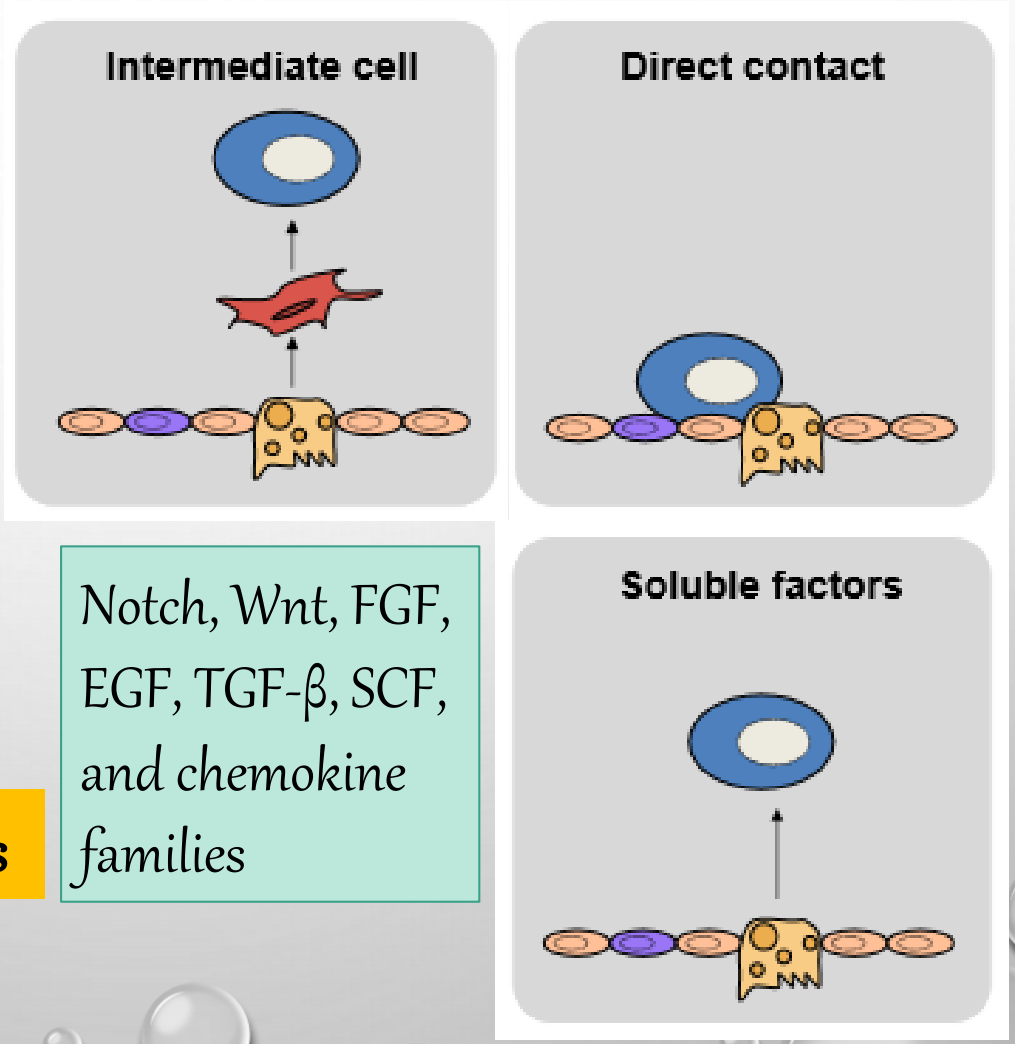
A specialized cellular environment that provides stem cells with the support needed for self-renewal.



Stem cell niche

Cells only

A single cell type, or a whole host of interacting cells. Cells outside the stem cell's lineage, or they may derive primarily from the stem cell's own descendants.



Cells & ECM

Secreted or cell surface factors

Notch, Wnt, FGF, EGF, TGF-β, SCF, and chemokine families

Why stem cells need a special environment?

- Demands on stem cells necessitate **special support for viability**.
- **Nutritive** function
- Niches might be agents of **feedback control (control of stem cell pool size)**.
- Niches are instruments of **coordination among tissue compartments**.
- Niches are **hubs of inter-lineage coordination**.

Types of stem cells

Embryonic stem cells

- Are able to differentiate into all the specialized embryonic tissue

Adult stem cells

- Act as a repair system for the body replacing specialized damaged cells

Potency of stem cells

The differentiation potential of the stem cells

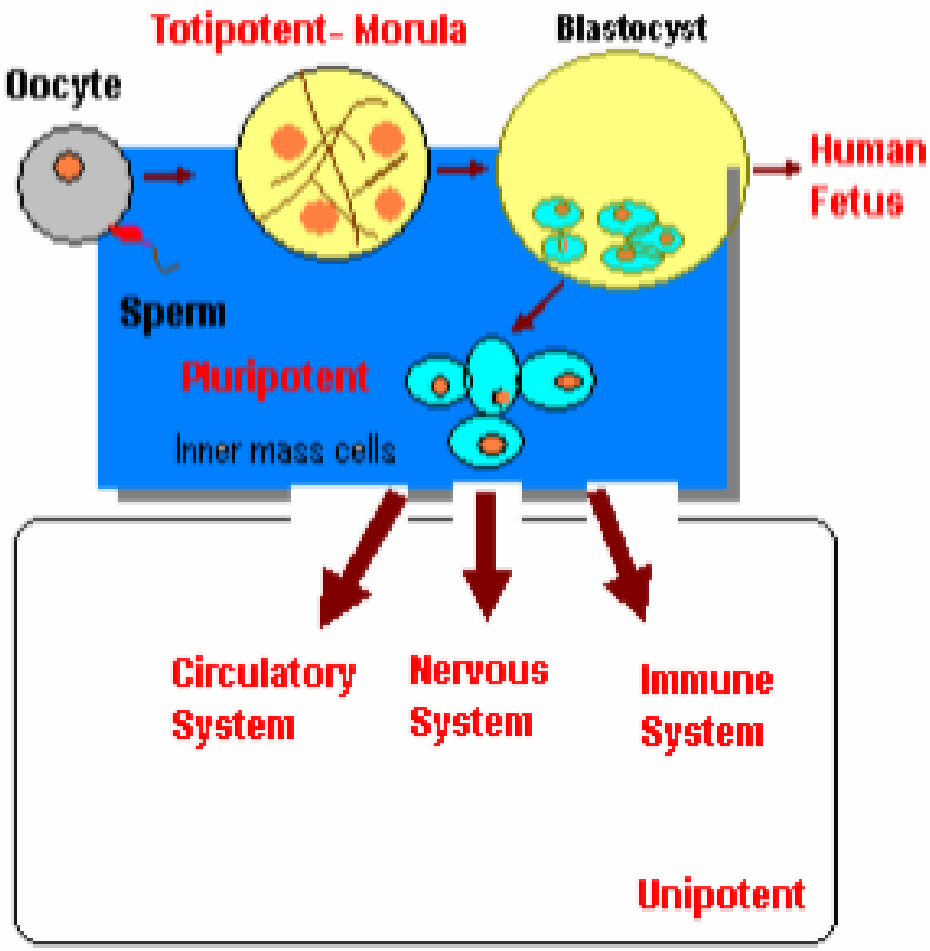
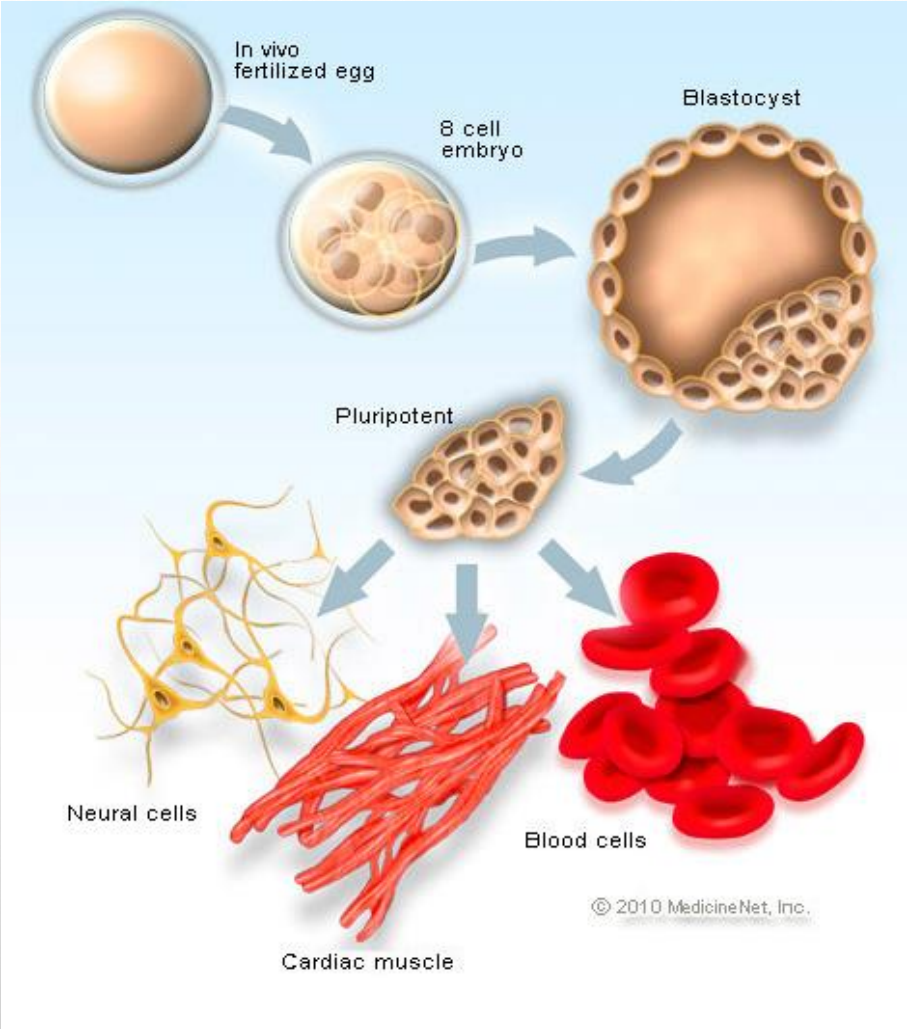


Figure 1: Potency of stem cells

Dr. Diala Abu-Hassan

Embryonic Stem Cells (ESCs)

- ✓ ES cells are derived from inner cell mass of mammalian blastocysts
- ✓ Develop before implantation in the uterus



Pluripotency of ESCs

Pluripotency transcription factors:

1. Oct 4
2. Nanog
3. Wnt-βcatenin signalling
4. Other TFs

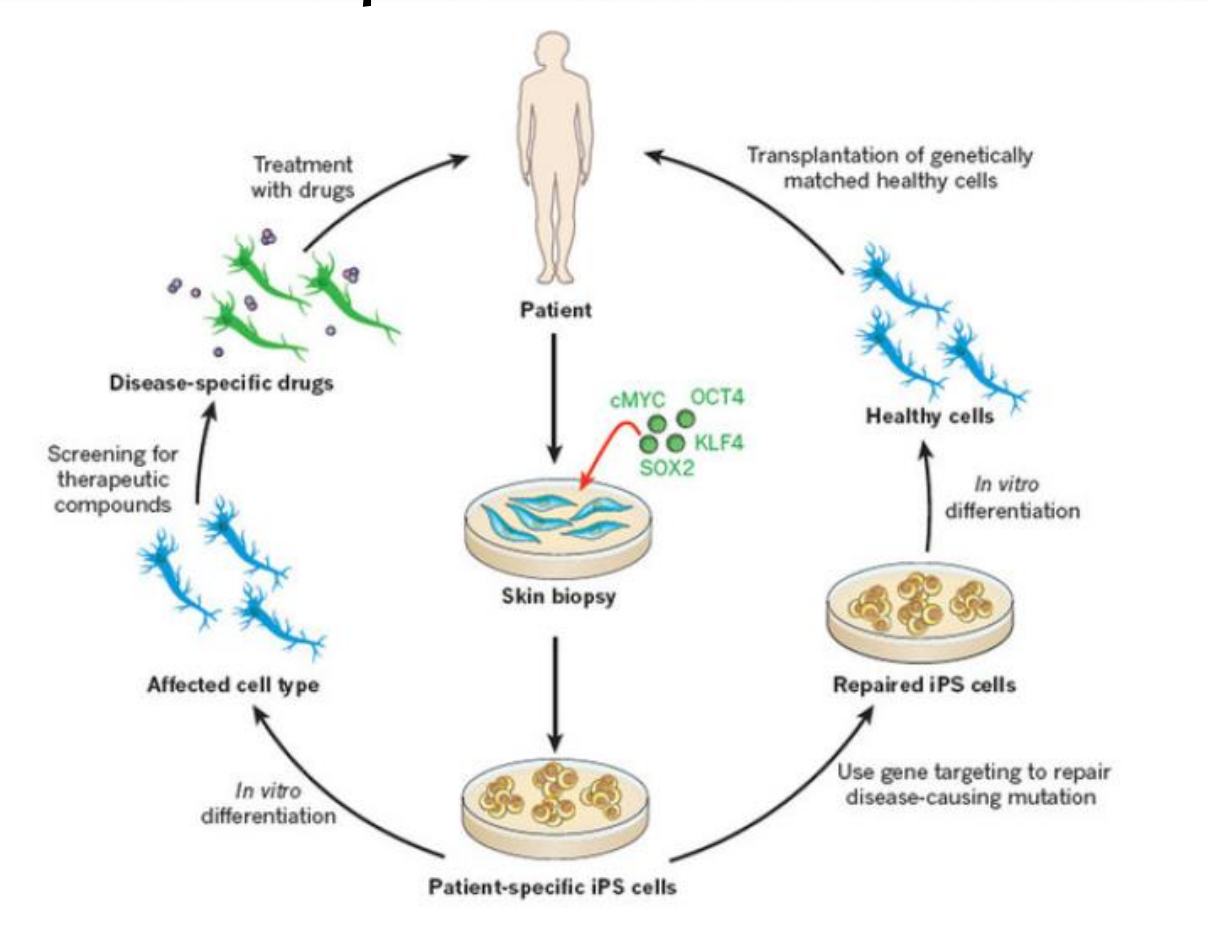
The Ethical Dilemma of ESCs

Prevention or alleviation of suffering

Respect the value of human life

Morals and religion

Induced Pluripotent Stem Cells (iPSCs)



Ethical

Safer

Autologous

Patient-specific

Generation of iPSCs

- **iPS cells were obtained by transducing embryonic and adult fibroblasts with defined transcription factors.**
  - **OCT3/4, SOX2, c-Myc, KLF4**

Takahashi K, Yamanaka S. 2006. *Induction of pluripotent stem cells from mouse embryonic and adult fibroblast cultures by defined factors.* **Cell 126:663–676.**

Takahashi K, Tanabe K, Ohnuki M, Narita M, Ichisaka T, Tomoda K, Yamanaka S. 2007. *Induction of pluripotent stem cells from adult human fibroblasts by defined factors.* **Cell 131:861–872.**

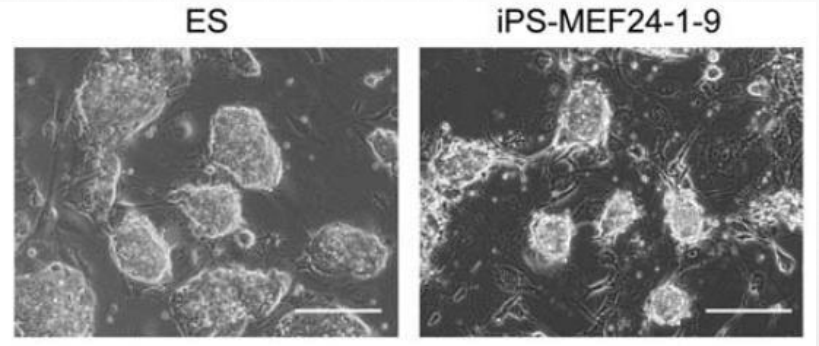
Yamanaka's comparison of iPS and ES cells

Surface antigens

Morphology

Gene expression

Telomerase activities



iPS cells are indistinguishable from ES cells in:

Epigenetic status of pluripotent cell-specific genes

In vitro differentiation

Proliferation

Teratoma formation

Promoter activities

Adult stem cells

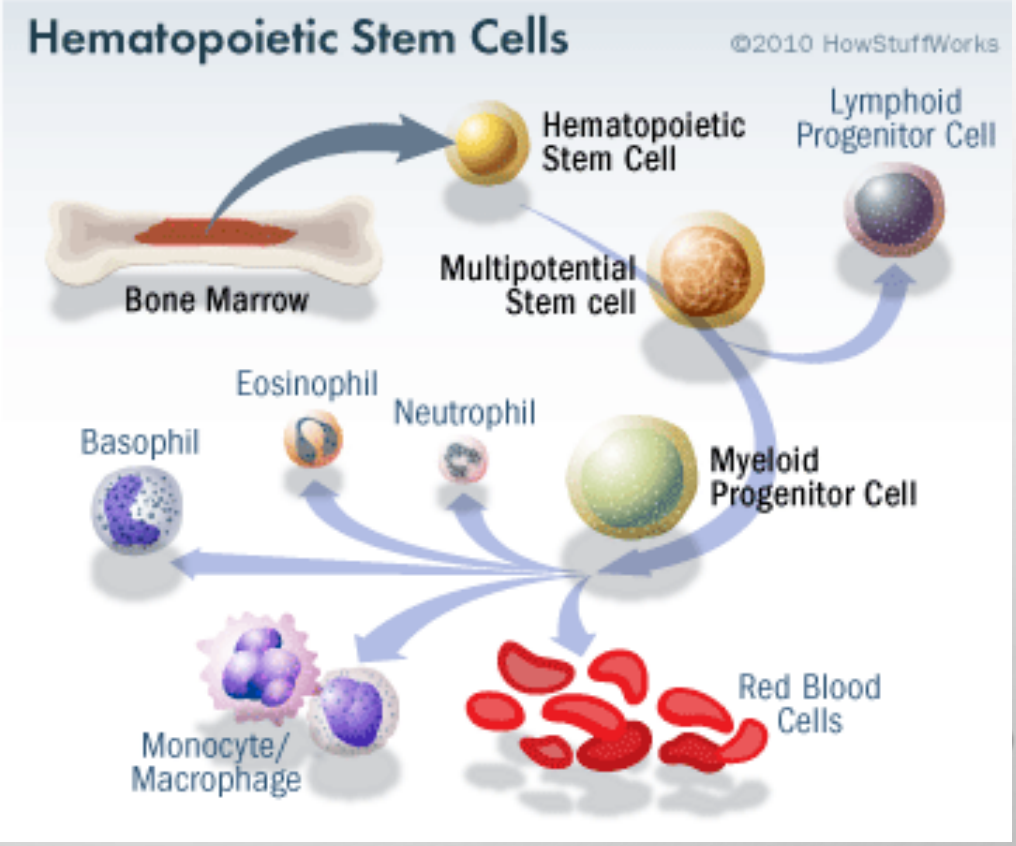
Undifferentiated cells found through out the body.

Function: they divide to replenish dying cells and regenerate damaged tissue

Types of adult stem cells

1. Bone marrow stem cells

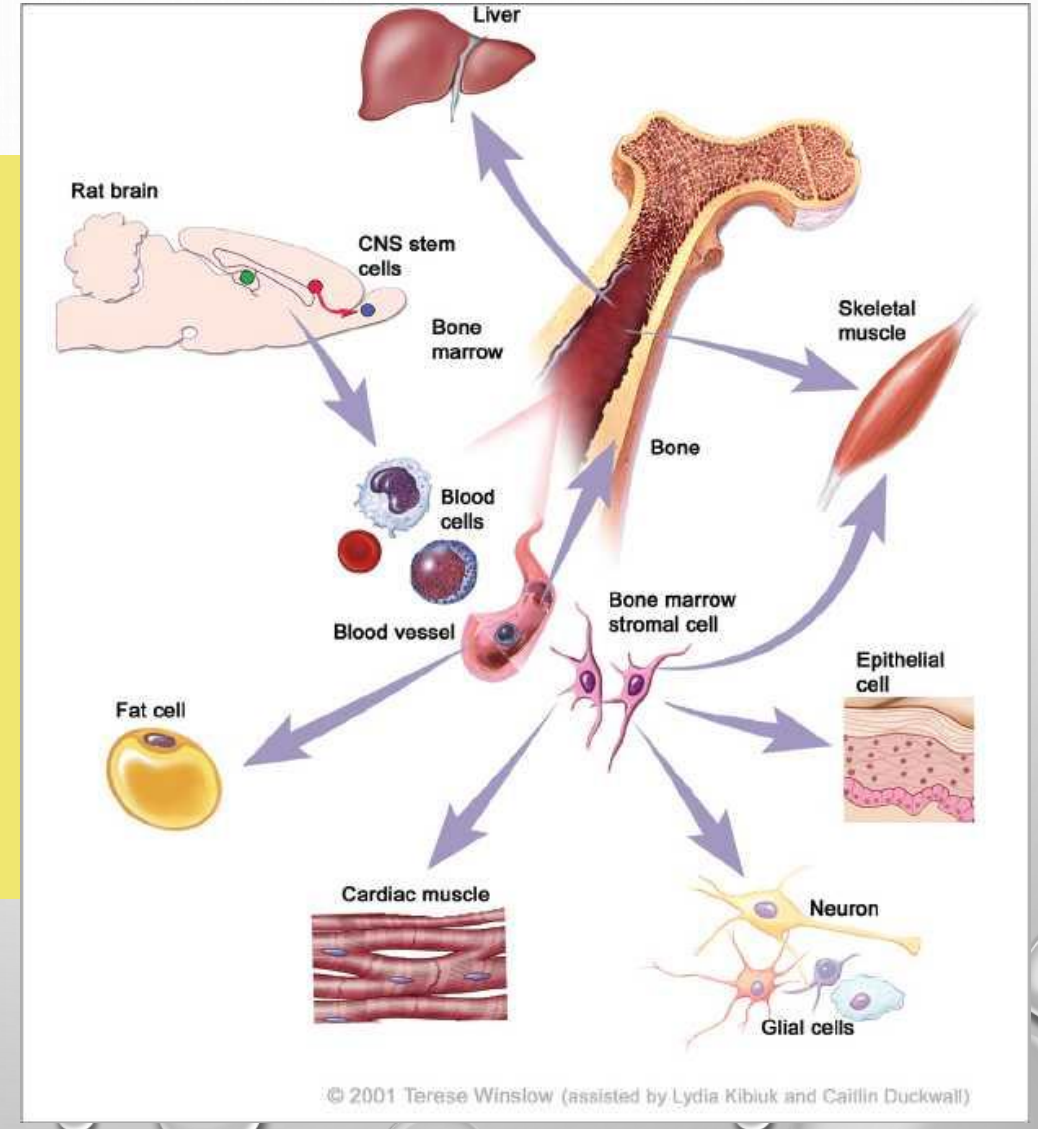
A. Hematopoietic stem cells



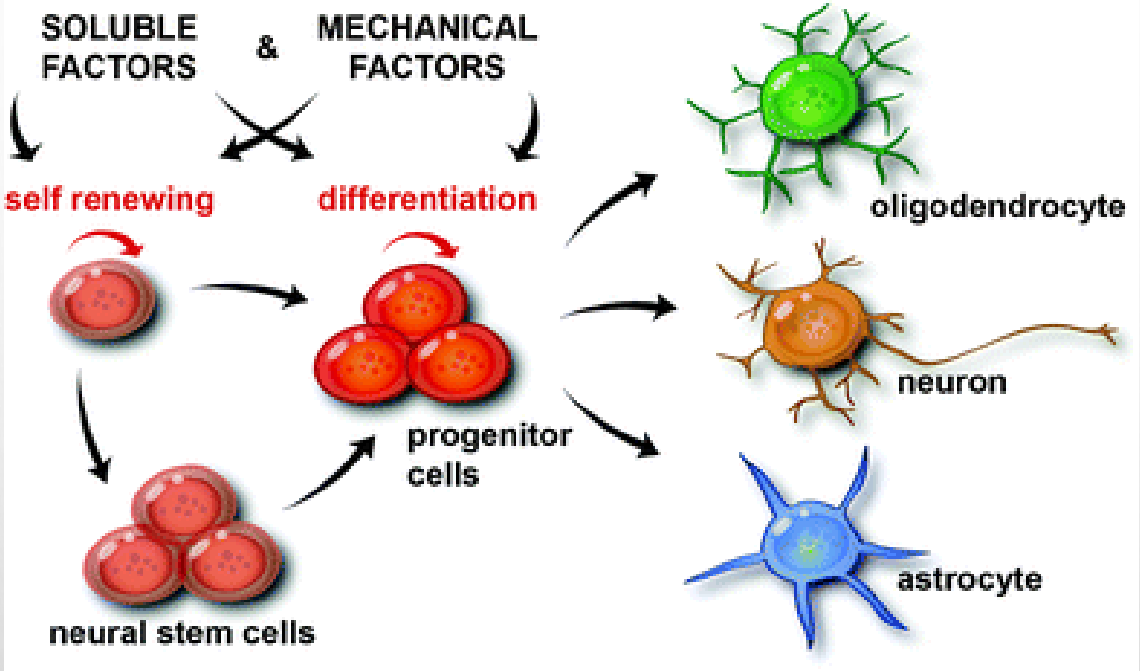
Types of adult stem cells

1. **Bone marrow stem cells**

B. Somatic stem cells *such as mammary stem cells and mesenchymal stem cells (osteoblasts, chondrocytes, myocytes, adipocytes, neuronal cells).*

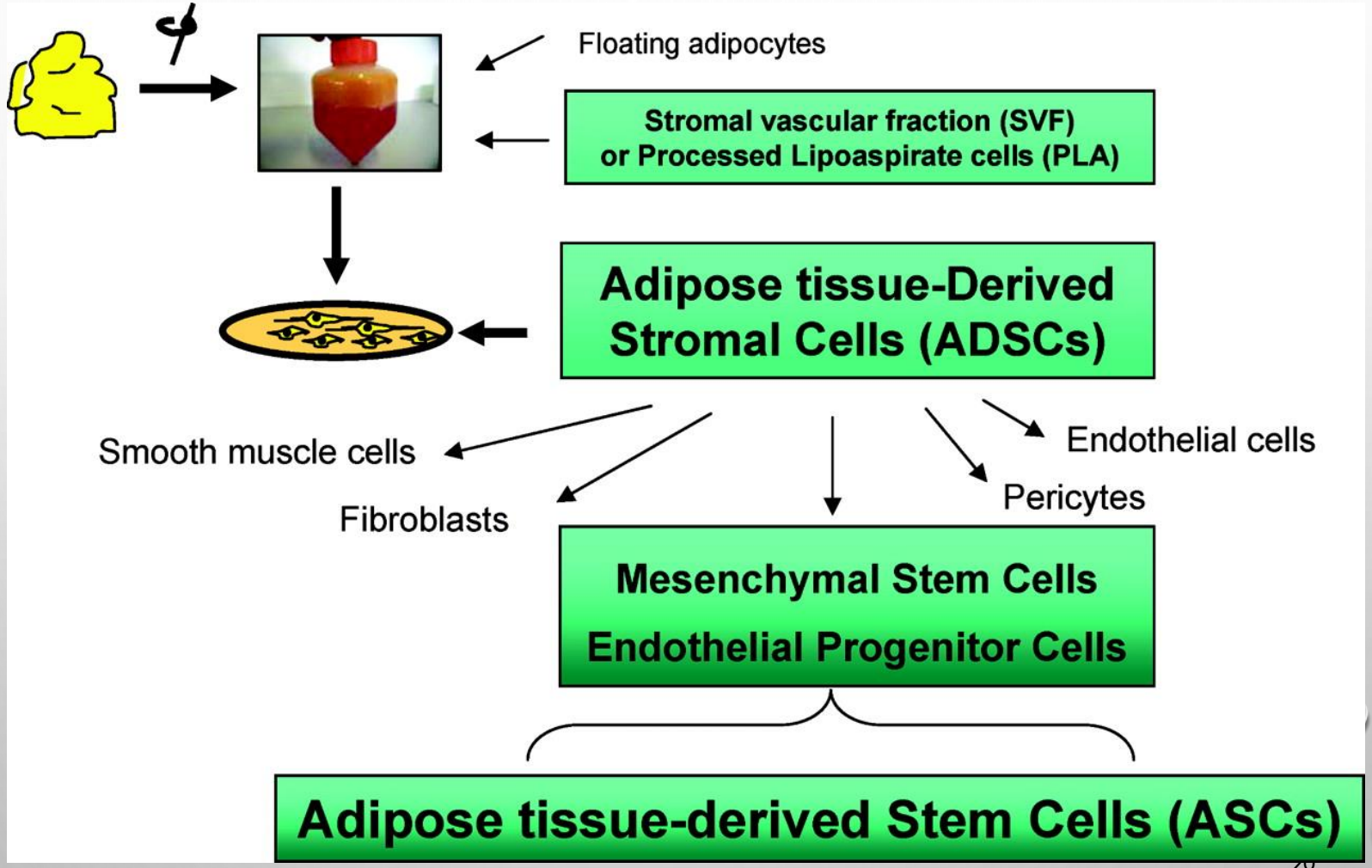


Types of adult stem cells



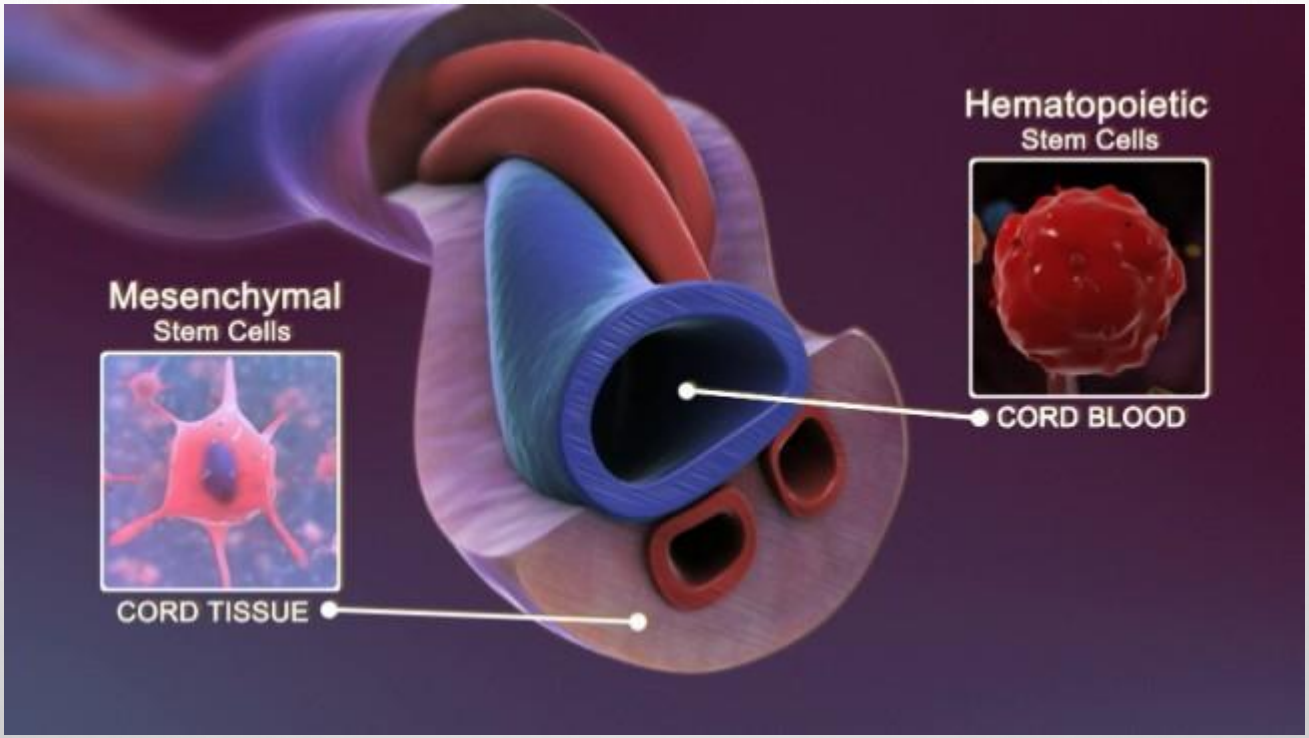
2. Neural stem cells : neurospheres – *floating heterogenous aggregates of cells, containing a large proportion of stem cells responsible for adult neurogenesis in subventriculare zone, which lines the lateral ventricles of the brain, and the dentate gyrus of the hippocampal formations.*

Types of adult stem cells



3. Adipose stem cells (ASCs).

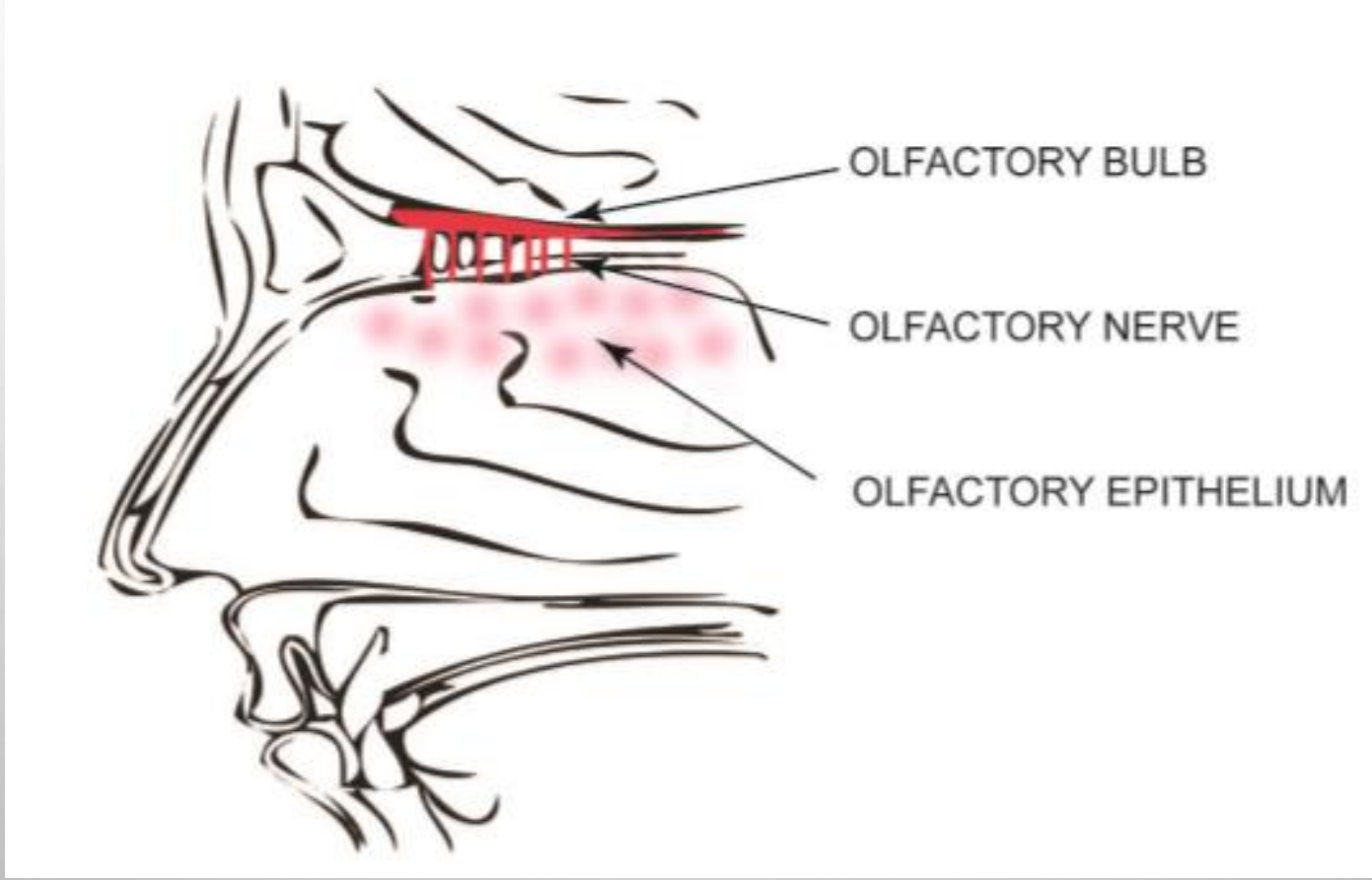
Types of adult stem cells



4. Umbilical cord stem cells

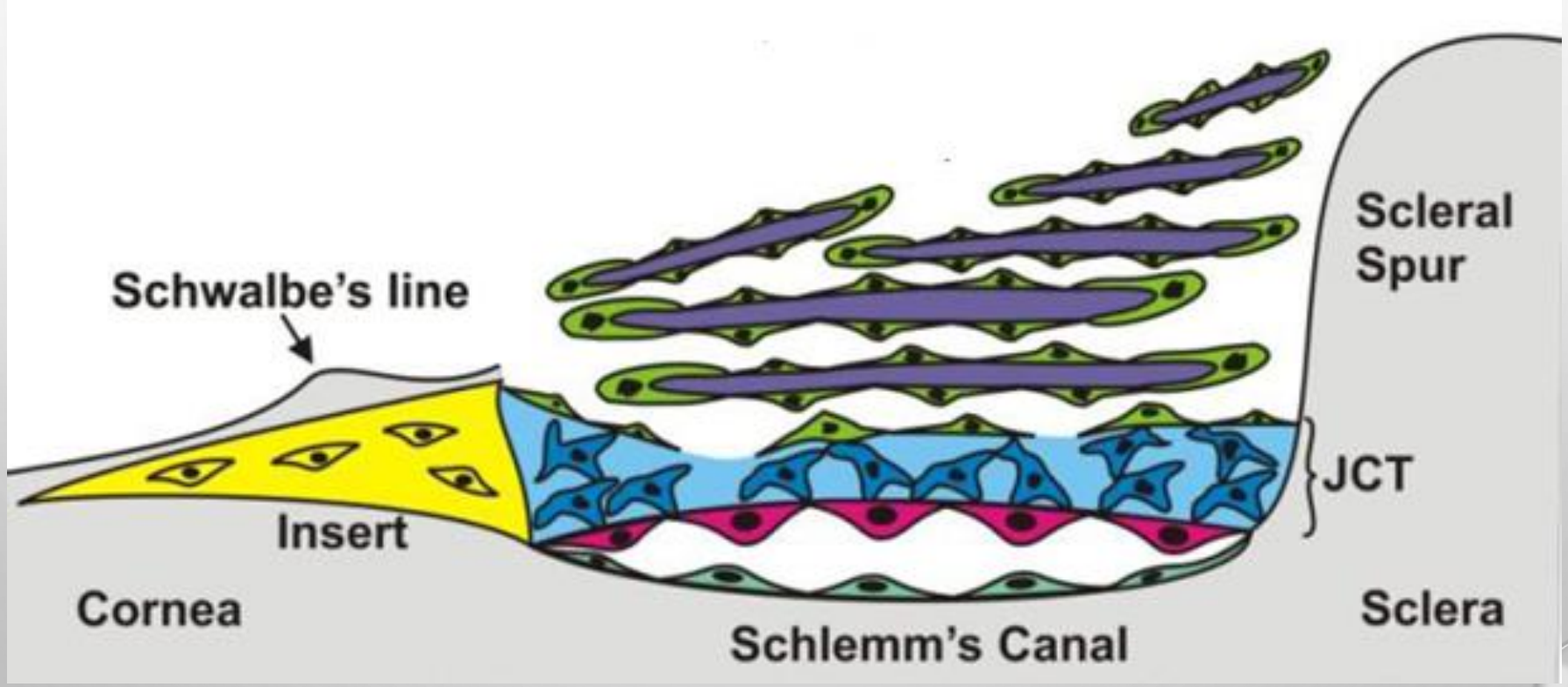
Types of adult stem cells

5. Olfactory adult stem cells: *found in olfactory mucosal cells*



Types of adult stem cells

6. **Tissue stem cells** *in cornea, trabecular meshwork, etc.*



Trans-differentiation vs developmental plasticity

Trans-differentiation	Developmental plasticity
A change in stem cell differentiation from one cell type to another	The multiplicity of stem cell differentiation options

Why stem cell research?

- **Functional genomic studies** to understand human embryonic gene expression, genomic data mining, and bioinformatics.

- To study biological processes to understand **human developmental disorders** like birth defects, cancers, etc.

- Creating **human disease models** for drug discovery and development.

- **Cell-based therapy and regenerative medicine**.

Cancer stem cells (CSCs)

Are tumor cells that have the essential properties of self renewal, clonal tumor initiation capacity, clonal long term repopulation potential and plasticity