

**National Apex Committee for Stem Cell Research and Therapy (NAC – SCRT)  
joins forces with ASCI to address issues on misleading advertisements  
promoting stem cell therapy of unapproved indications in India**

**Mumbai, February 10, 2015:** The National Apex Committee for Stem Cell Research and Therapy (NAC-SCRT) joins hands with Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) to monitor advertisements that claim stem cell based therapies. This became necessary because several clinics and organisations advertise these therapies in ways that attract vulnerable patients for therapies whose safety and efficacy is not established.

As per the National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research- 2013 there are no approved indications for stem cell therapy other than the Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation (HSCT) for haematological disorders. NAC-SCRT has observed that several clinicians / companies / hospitals advertise stem cell based therapies other than haematopoietic stem cell transplantation for haematological disorders on their websites. These therapies are currently investigational and must be conducted only within the scope of clinical trials.

**Quote from Prof. Alok Srivastava, Chairman, NAC-SCRT:**

“Advertisements claiming to offer stem cell based therapies other than Haematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantations for blood diseases are in violation of the clause 10.3.1 of the National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research-2013. Use of stem cells for any other purpose outside the ambit of clinical trials will be against these guidelines and is hence not permissible. We have asked ASCI to review such advertisements and are happy that action has been initiated against 23 such websites. It is necessary that such misleading advertisements be removed and action be taken against the defaulters unless they are suitably modified to clarify the unproven nature of these therapies and are only offered within approved clinical trials. The NAC-SCRT will be reviewing the developments in the field and modifying its position with regard to proven therapies from time to time.”

**Quote from Mr. Narendra Ambwani, Chairman, ASCI**

“Since the stem cell based therapies are currently experimental / investigational, advertising these for indications not approved by regulatory authorities is in violation of Chapter III of the ASCI code for Self Regulation of Advertisements. The code requires that advertisements should not propagate products or services, the use of which is banned under the law. ASCI will be partnering with the Ministry of Health to curb such unlawful advertisements promoting medical practices not approved by regulatory authorities.”

ASCI has swiftly got into action and processed complaints against web-site advertisements highlighted by NAC-SCRT for violating of the clause 10.3.1 of the National Guidelines for Stem Cell Research 2013 NAC-SCRT. It is good to note that several advertisers have immediately started amending the web-site content.

### **About Advertising Standard Council of India (ASCI)**

Advertising Standards Council of India is a self-regulatory voluntary organization of the advertising content. ASCI & its Consumer Complaints Council (CCC) deal with Complaints received from Consumers, Industry and other stakeholders including Government bodies against Advertisements which are considered as False, Misleading, Indecent, leading to Unsafe practices / products, or Unfair to competition, and in contravention of the ASCI Code for Self-Regulation in Advertising. ASCI is a key stakeholder in the Inter Ministerial Committee of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting as well as Inter Ministerial Monitoring Committee set up by the Department of Consumer Affairs.

### **The National Apex Committee for Stem Cell Research and Therapy (NAC-SCRT)**

The National Apex Committee for Stem Cell Research and Therapy (NAC-SCRT) is the apex body constituted by the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Govt. of India with subject experts and representatives from different scientific organizations and regulatory agencies to oversee the activities in the field of stem cell research and therapy in India. The NAC-SCRT examines the scientific, technical, ethical, legal and social issues involving stem cell research and therapy in India.