

Stem-Cell Treatment for Racehorse Is Golden

(PHILADELPHIA, PA) June 12, 2008 – A bowed tendon used to mean the end of a racehorse’s career. Now, as [The Scientist](#) magazine reports, the injury can be recovered with a novel self-derived stem-cell treatment.

Greg’s Gold earned over \$1,000,000 during his career despite suffering a “career ending” bowed tendon in 2005. He was able to recover and continue racing thanks to the stem-cell technology of Poway, CA company, Vet-Stem.

“The ligaments were just shredded,” says the horse’s trainer, David Hofmans. Veterinarian Wade Byrd extracted a pad of adipose tissue from under the horse’s tail and sent it overnight to Vet-Stem. There, the stem cells were isolated from the tissue and returned in a refrigerated container in less than 48 hours. Byrd injected the cells at the site of the shredded ligaments and ten months later Greg’s Gold won his first top-tier stakes race since the injury. Hofmans says he would recommend the treatment for other horses: “Absolutely, I think it’s the only treatment for this kind of injury.”

The original idea was that the stem cells would differentiate into tendon and ligament cells. That has proven wrong says Vet-Stem advisory board member Art Caplan, who studies stem cell therapeutics at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH. The stem cells seem to calm the inflammatory reaction and then organize for the self-repair of the damaged tissue.

Vet-Stem, founded in 2002, has treated almost 3,000 horses according to CEO Bob Harmon. He says every horse they have treated has had a favorable outcome. Vet-stem has recently expanded its treatment to man’s best friend, conducting a double-blind study of dogs with chronic osteoarthritis. Owners of three of the dogs in the study were considering euthanasia before the dogs were treated, and those three dogs have improved. Vet-Stem is also in the process of setting up a study for dogs with chronic inflammatory liver disease.

Since his recovery, Greg’s Gold won several more races and placed in others. He has since been retired and is now living luxuriously on a farm in Southern California and starring in the advertising for Vet-Stem.

[The Scientist’s coverage](#) of horses extends to the web and looks at The American Museum of Natural History’s new exhibit explores the human - horse relationship. Visit <http://www.the-scientist.com/blog/display/54740/> to read “A Fine Time for Equines” and to view the interactive slideshow of the exhibit.

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