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## What Educell d.o.o. needs from slovene research?

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Educell d.o.o., Ljubljana (<http://www.educell.si>) is a cell therapy service SME company, focused on development of tissue engineering applications for regeneration of structural tissues. The origins of Educell d.o.o. date back to July 1997, when the company was founded with the goal of introducing cell therapy and tissue engineering to human medicine. In 1999 Autologous Chondrocyte Implantation (ACI) was accepted as a routine procedure at the Clinical Centre of Ljubljana for the treatment of damaged knee cartilage. ACI was accepted from Ministry of Health for financing in 1999.

The company was founded by Venture Capital Found (Horizonte venture management & partners, Wiena). In 2001 the ownership was restructured (second round investments) and we became R&D department of production facility Educell GmbH in Austria. In 2004 the Slovenian part of Educell GmbH was bought by Novoline holding (Slovenian ownership), which helped us to stabilise the company and focus again on research and development of tissue engineering applications as well as service for human cell based products for clinical use in the Slovenian clinics.

Research and development team of Educell d.o.o. collaborates with several Institutes and Universities in Slovenia, particularly with the University Medical Centre Ljubljana, Blood Transfusion Centre of Slovenia and University of Ljubljana. We also collaborate with several institutes and companies in Europe and the USA. Educell d.o.o. has been the member of Technology Park Ljubljana since December 1997.

We provide autologous tissue engineered products for treatment of articular cartilage, vesicoureteral reflux and regeneration of periodontal bone tissue which are used in Clinical centre Ljubljana and some other institutions in Slovenia. We cover R&D activities from basic research of cell phenotype to preclinical experiments (animal trials). In collaboration with clinicians we are involved also in clinical testing of tissue engineered products. A lot was invested in quality management systems for human tissue engineered products. Besides applications of differentiated cells, our research is oriented also towards investigation of different stem cell sources and their technological potential for regenerative medicine.

We constantly collaborate with our partners in the field of education. Educell was a co-organiser of international symposia "Cartilage weekend" in 1999, 2001 and 2005, "The International Summer School of Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine" in 2008 and 2009 and many scientific events of Cell and Tissue Engineering Society of Slovenia.

Educell d.o.o. has had the licence for wholesale of the medical devices since 2005 and Human Tissue and Cell Establishment since 2008. As a strong research partner of Clinical Centre of Ljubljana, especially of Dept of Orthopaedic Surgery and Dept of Traumatology in Ljubljana, we have a very close collaboration with surgeons, especially in the field of implementing the new therapies into the practice. Due to legislation our service is limited to the Slovenian market.

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