

## Stem cell treatments change girl's life

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PIEDMONT, Okla. — Stem cell research is one of the newest and most exciting areas of study. Experts believe these tiny unwritten cells hold the keys to curing a number of diseases and debilitating injuries. But here in the U.S., stem cell research isn't moving fast enough for a growing number of families.

This is the story of an Oklahoma family that traveled to China for cutting-edge stem cell treatment not offered in the US.

Cora Beth Taylor walks a different road than most will ever travel.

Her journey is filled with obstacles, heartbreak and triumph.

Cora, William and Tate Taylor are triplets born premature.

The brothers have never shown any signs of prematurity.

But Cora, at about a year old, started falling behind developmentally.

By 18 months she had been diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy.

Cora has never had any cognitive delays.

She's a super-smart little gal but her muscles haven't developed properly.

It's devastating; they just won't cooperate.

Cora's parents, Kevin and Beth Taylor, have tried everything for their little girl; that is, everything available in the U.S.

Last year, Piedmont Schools raised the money to help the Taylors take Cora to China for treatment, close to \$50,000.

Research hospitals in China are using stem cells from donor umbilical cord blood to treat children with Cerebral Palsy.

Beth Taylor says, "That was a difficult decision to make to take your child to a foreign country for medical treatments. Living in the US you feel like this is the best there is."

The Taylors spent 37 days in China.

Cora Beth had eight stem cell transfusions.

Through a spinal tap, doctors put the cells into her spinal column where they penetrate the blood-brain barrier and get to work.

Critics are quick to point out this area of regenerative medicine has largely unverified effectiveness. Results are often anecdotal and the FDA is a long way from approving this type of experimental treatment for America.

Though the Taylors are convinced and here's why.

Beth Taylor said, "Within the first couple of weeks we could see changes. We could see definite improvements in strength and balance."

Cora had never been able to do a sit-up in her life ever; she did her first in China.

Nine-year-old Cora remembers, "The thing that I was most happy about accomplishing was a sit up. Because I'd tried to do a sit up before going to China but I just couldn't do it."

Now, Cora Beth can do 20.

The most notable change has been Cora's walk.

This third-grader had never gone to school without her walker.

Today she walks the halls without it; she hasn't used it in months.

She recently competed in a beauty pageant in her hometown of Piedmont, without the help of her walker as well.

Cora says, "So, I'm really excited. I don't think there's anything that I couldn't accomplish."

Doctors say Cora's stem cells will continue to mature over the next few years.

For her, there are many milestones ahead.

In the US, Duke University is studying stem cell treatments for children with Cerebral Palsy.

Right now they don't have FDA clearance to use donor stem-cells.

Experts say treatment similar to Cora Beth's Chinese therapy is years away in the U.S.