

Lounge

FLYING CAN SAVE LIVES

Thousands of people with leukaemia all over the world are waiting for life-saving stem cells. Possible donors come either from their own family or they are found through internationally networked donor registries and in many cases live far away from the patient. This is where special couriers come in.

Every year, several thousand stem cell transports are planned in Neu-lsenburg. The ten member stem cell team of the logistics expert time:matters is available 24/7 to prepare couriers optimally for their missions around the world and support them at any time. These journeys are anything but ordinary: “We know that these transports can make the difference between whether a person will see their next birthday or not” says Marco Dehler, head of the stem cell service team.

This means, nothing can go wrong. The stem cells – carefully packaged in special boxes that were originally developed for the military – must always be cooled to 2°C. Heat is a threat to the sensitive freight. The couriers keep their eyes on the box for the entire trip. No time for sleep. Not even on long-distance flights between Europe and the US, which easily last 24 hours plus X in total. Couriers need to protect their shipments like bodyguards. For instance, from security officers who want to send the box through a scanner, which would destroy the stem cells.

A case for professional travellers

Each individual leg of the journey, every step the couriers takes between the collection center and the recipient is planned meticulously in advance. Twice! If, for example, a flight is cancelled due to a strike, an alternative is already booked. What all of the 350 stem cell couriers at time:matters have in common is that they are professional travellers. They include a lot of former pilots and flight attendants, as well as former managers who were frequent flyers in their professional lives – and now want to give something back as freelancers in the fight against leukaemia.

Marco Dehler: “It is very satisfying. You feel excited for them, especially since you know some of the patients’ information like gender, age, and health status.” Couriers and employees in Neu-lsenburg feel a special sense of responsibility every day. They have realised 15,000 stem cell transports. The rate of on-time and correct deliveries: 100%.



Picture left: Operations Manager Cigdem Vurucu clarifies some last-minute details with the stem cell courier Hartmut Wiebe. Wiebe lived in Tokyo for several years as a bank manager and is a professional traveller.

time:matters

The roughly 370 employees at the Lufthansa Cargo subsidiary time:matters are experts for particularly urgent transports. Every year, they transport more than 500,000 shipments via air, rail and road all over the world. This includes urgently needed spare parts, medical samples, hazardous goods and important documents. time:matters has its own courier terminals in Frankfurt and Munich. More at: www.time-matters.com