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I have great pleasure in providing this letter supporting the application of Professor Miodrag Stojkovic for funding to support the creation of a stem cell research institute at the medical school of Kragujevac. I have worked with Prof. Stojkovic since 2003 when he, Majlinda Lako and I were the first team to derive fully characterised Human embryonic stem cells in the United Kingdom. Subsequently our collaborative efforts have progressed to more detailed examination of the molecular mechanisms regulating the embryonic stem cell phenotype and the developed of methods to direct their differentiation into specific somatic cell types.

More recently, during Prof. Stojkovic's time at the Centro de investigacion Principe Felipe (CIPF) in Spain, we have become interested in the mechanisms by which somatic cells can undergo epigenetic reprogramming to produce induced pluripotent stem cells. These are a potentially valuable resource upon which we may build future strategies for regenerative medicine and are now one of the principal research areas of my laboratory at Newcastle University and also at CIPF where I maintain another research group. If the Stem Cell institute in Kraguevac is established this will greatly enhance the ongoing collaboration between my laboratories and Prof. Stojkovic. We intend to pursue our current areas of investigation such as stem cell differentiation and molecular characterisation but a newly established institute also offers the possibility to develop further projects and therefore we are particularly interested to explore the possibility of establishing programs for stem cell banking and transplantation that could expand the reputation of Kraguevac medical school in the field of stem cell biology.

Yours Sincerely

Lyle Armstrong, PhD