



Affinity of Marrow  
Stem Cells Donation

# A Loss Allows Love to Be Expressed in Another Way

By Liu Chen-Chen

At the end of 2022, a young donor, Jiang Zhengwei, came to the hematopoietic stem cells collection room of Hualien Tzu Chi Hospital. During the donation process, he maintained a video chat with his wife to let her know his progress and to make her feel at ease.

It turned out that his wife was also a donor, but her intended recipient was their 5-year-old child.

Their son suffered from hemophagocytic syndrome shortly after age one. After two non-relative donations and a third haploidentical transplant donated by his mother, he fought hard during three hematopoietic stem cell transplants. However, he lost his battle to the disease and passed away. Two kind-hearted strangers donated bone marrow to their son; in turn, the couple registered at the Tzu Chi Stem Cells Center Registry soon after.

Lying on a chair in the stem cell collection room, Zhengwei said that he was paying back the love his son received at that time. Life cannot be brought back, but love can be offered.

In the hematopoietic stem cell collection room, the voice of the other party on the phone could be heard from time to time. Zhengwei's wife, through the phone video, repetitively reminded him of the details and possible side



**Zhengwei's son had always been in the hospital for treatment, beginning at a young age. Even though he was often uncomfortable, when he felt better, he always brought smiles to everyone.**

effects of his donation. People could not help but wonder if his wife was a nurse or past donor?

Zhengwei lowered his head, looked at the photo on his phone and said, "She is also a donor, for our own son." After speaking, he gazed into the void.

Their son suffered from hemophagocytic syndrome upon reaching age one. In 2021, he underwent transplantation with the mother's haploidentical hematopoietic stem cells, but it did not save his life. Their son was first found to be abnormal at a party when other parents observed the child's skin was too



**Jiang Zhengwei said that his son resembled his wife a bit more than himself. He loved to cling to his mother.**



**This is Jiang Zhengwei's phone wallpaper; a page that has been unreplaceable. Life is so impermanent, as evidenced in his son's experience. His child has given him the biggest lesson of his life.**

pale and bloodless, and suggested a medical examination.

At that time, because the son was just over one year old, he didn't feel much discomfort, so Zhengwei and his wife took him to a nearby regional hospital for examination. However, after the blood test, the doctor suggested that he be transferred to a large hospital

immediately since they did not have a pediatric blood division. While at the large hospital, the doctor immediately admitted him for blood transfusions. His blood test results showed abnormalities, and the hemoglobin was very low. Not long after the blood transfusion was completed, the hemoglobin dropped again, and he had to keep repeating

blood transfusions.

At the beginning, the doctor didn't say there was any major problem. The young man went back for a blood transfusion once every two weeks. However, the transfusion continued until the doctor said that it seemed impossible to continue like this, and there was no progress being made. Blood transfusions and medications did not improve the condition, and the stimulation for the growth of hematopoietic stem cells was ineffective. The doctor mentioned to Jiang Zhengwei that they needed to rid their son's body of the iron accumulated in the system before the body was overwhelmed, and they needed to find an aggressive treatment solution.

After two rounds of chemotherapy, there was still little progress. In 2019, at the age of two, on the advice of a doctor, the child underwent his first hematopoietic stem cell transplantation that was not donated by relatives. Not long after the transplantation, it relapsed again. In March 2021, the second transplantation was performed. The condition remained the same, and again there was no improvement. Finally, the hospital suggested using the mother's hematopoietic stem cells, and performed the third transplantation in a semi-identical manner.

The tiny child suffered a lot

undergoing treatment in the hospital for a long time. He was often uncomfortable, but as long as he was in good spirits, he was everyone's happy go-getter. His youthful talks always made everyone happy. Unfortunately, the young person's fight was no match for the ruthlessness of his affliction, and, in the summer of 2021, his short-lived destiny with the world ended.

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Zhengwei said that after his child fell ill, they checked their family history and found no evidence of blood disease. Their child suffered from such a blood disease when he was barely over one year old. The couple was greatly impacted, spending too much time in the hospital ward when their son should instead expect to enjoy a happy childhood without worries. There were still many fairy tales that have not been told, and many playgrounds that have not been visited. During that time, my heart was suffering. With the encouragement of volunteers from the Tzu Chi Stem Cells Center Care Team, the husband and wife both participated in hematopoiesis stem cell blood test for registration to become donors.



One year after his son's death, Zheng Wei was notified that he had a donor recipient match, and he immediately agreed to ask for a leave of absence to cooperate with the relevant pre-donation inspection and scheduled donation date. He believed that this was an opportunity for him to represent his child to save lives, and it was his desire to return gratitude.

"Our child had received donations before. We also felt if given the opportunity, we can also give back," said Zhengwei. When asked about the blessings he would like to offer to the recipients, Zhengwei replied positively, "Although my child did not succeed, I

hope others can succeed."

During the collection of hematopoietic stem cells, Zhengwei looked back at the blood bags on the rack and reflected how the donor who saved his child must have felt at that time. He was both emotional and grateful for the love from a stranger who tried to save his child. Although his child was not rescued successfully, he wanted to do something for him, in his memory. What had been lost could return in a different kind of love. He reflected on what his son's aunt wrote in the final blessing: "In the face of death, we may be timid, but for love, we must be brave."



**Jiang Zhengwei donated hematopoietic stem cells, regarding it as a reward for the stranger who had donated stem cells to his child.**