CryoLife, Inc. Reports Results Of Eight Year Follow-Up Study On Cryopreserved Meniscus Use In Knee Reconstructive Surgery

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ATLANTA, March 6 /PRNewswire/ -- CryoLife, Inc. (NYSE: CRY), the leader in the development and commercialization of tissue-engineered implantable heart valves, vascular grafts and protein-based surgical adhesives, today reported results of an eight-year follow-up study of patients who have undergone total or partial meniscus replacement knee reconstructive surgery.

The results of the follow-up study (1991-2000) involving 13 implanting surgeons and 136 patients were presented on March 1, 2001, at the Meniscus Transplantation Study Group, held in conjunction with the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons meeting in San Francisco, California, February 28 - March 4, 2001.

Steven G. Anderson, President and Chief Executive Officer, CryoLife, Inc., noted, "The eight-year follow-up study was designed to substantiate the efficacy and validity of utilizing cryopreserved human meniscus cartilage in orthopaedic reconstructive surgery in restoring normal knee function for patients suffering from meniscus damage."

The study results indicate that 90 percent of patients reported their surgery as a success, 80 percent rated their current knee function as normal to nearly normal, 86 percent of patients reported freedom from graft removal and 76 percent had good to excellent results at eight years. Pain levels were rated low at an average of 2.7 on a 10-point scale.

The single most frequent injury to the knee is the tearing or rupture of the meniscus cartilage, the crescent shaped, pad-like structure between the femur and the tibia, which is critical to proper functioning of the knee. There are over 200,000 meniscus-related surgeries each year in the U.S. resulting in the removal of all or part of the meniscus cartilage, leaving patients with the prospect of developing osteoarthritis or joint disease. In an effort to provide better results, CryoLife scientists initiated a program in 1989 for the recovery and cryopreservation of human meniscus tissue, providing orthopaedic surgeons with the tissue necessary for normal knee function. Since inception of the program, CryoLife has provided meniscus tissue to support more than 3,410 implant procedures by 465 orthopaedic surgeons in the United States and Canada.

Founded in 1984, CryoLife, Inc. is the leader in the development and commercialization of implantable living human tissues for use in cardiovascular, vascular, and orthopaedic surgeries throughout the United States and Canada. The Company's BioGlue(R) surgical adhesive is approved as an adjunct for acute thoracic aortic dissections under HDE regulations in the United States and is CE marked in the European Union and approved in Canada and Australia for use in vascular and pulmonary sealing and repair. The Company also manufactures the SynerGraft(R) heart valve, the world's first tissue-engineered heart valve replacement and the CryoLife-O'Brien(R) and CryoLife-Ross(R) stentless porcine heart valves, which are CE Marked for distribution within the European community. The human heart valves and vascular grafts processed by CryoLife using the SynerGraft technology are distributed in the U.S. under the trade names of CryoValve(R) SG and CryoVein(R) SG, respectively.

For additional information about the company, visit CryoLife's Web site: http://www.cryolife.com . SOURCE CryoLife, Inc.

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