’Young Blood’ Revitalizes Brains and Muscles of Aging Mice

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Could the blood from younger folks be a key to treating Alzheimer’s disease in older people? Researchers are checking out this possibility after discovering that blood taken from young mice can actually rejuvenate the memory and muscles of old mice, according to new findings published in the journals Nature Medicine and Science and reported by NBC News.

For the study, two teams of scientists at Stanford and Harvard universities surgically connected 2-month-old mice with mice that were 15 months old, for a five-week-long blood transfusion. Researchers then tested the older mice by watching how well they could navigate through a maze.

“It was as if these old brains were recharged by young blood,” said Tony Wyss-Coray, PhD, a professor of neurology at Stanford, and the lead author of the study. In fact, the transfusion worked so well that the old mice were able to navigate mazes just as quickly as their younger counterparts. They also tended to exercise and smell things better.

Conversely, when younger mice shared blood with even older mice—they were 21 months old—their production of new brain cells seemed to slow down.

Scientists want to figure out what factors in the young mice’s blood might be responsible for the rejuvenation effect in their older counterparts. Of course, researchers are also curious to know if the rejuvenation effect would work similarly in humans.

Did you know that a simple blood test might be able to predict whether or not you will get Alzheimer’s disease? Click here for more information.

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