

HEALTH MATTERS

Drug Addiction Vaccine Offers Hope

Prevents body from getting high

(AP) -- In a search for what could be the ultimate cure for drug addiction, scientists have developed a vaccine which prevents the body from getting high.

The hope is that it can stop people from falling back into a spiral of addiction if they have a relapse.

The most promising results so far have been with cocaine, but researchers hope it could also one day be used to cure addiction to methamphetamine, heroin and even cigarettes.

"The vaccine slowly decreases the amount of cocaine that reaches the brain," said Thomas Kosten, a professor of psychiatry and neuroscience at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, who has been working on the vaccine since 1995.

"It's a slow process, and patients do not go through any significant withdrawal symptoms."

The vaccine works by getting the body's immune system to recognize the drug as foreign and attack it



A cocaine sample in a medical laboratory.

in the blood stream.

It does so by injecting an altered version of the drug into the body which has been attached to a protein that the body will recognize as a threat.

"The body then says, 'This is a foreign article. I

should start making antibodies to it,'" Kosten said.

The cocaine molecules eventually pass through the kidneys and are excreted through the urine.

That stops the drug from reaching the brain and producing a sought-after high.

Use of the vaccine would lead to a gradual tapering of dependence, Kosten said.

"Gradually, antibody levels would rise. If you kept using (cocaine), you'd get less and less of an effect."

Of all the drugs tested, cocaine is the easiest one for which to develop a vaccine because of an enzyme in the bloodstream, cholinesterase, that helps break it down, Kosten said.

He has also begun to test vaccines for methamphetamine and heroin in animal studies, and hopes to eventually add nicotine to the list.

"That's going to be the moneymaker," he said.

The injections are designed for therapeutic -- not for preventative -- use, and are meant for those already suffering from addiction.

The vaccine has one more large-scale human study scheduled before it is ready for the federal Food and Drug Administration approval process.

Asthma Focus Group Recruits

Are you an African-American woman, age 18 or over, with asthma?

The Oregon Center for Applied Science is working on a research project designed to teach asthma self-management skills to African-American women with asthma.

The center will pay \$50 to participate in a 90-minute focus group discussion in the Portland area.

Call the center at 1-877-366-3119 and ask for the Asthma Self-Management Project. This research study is funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. There are no sales or mailing lists involved.

Few Know Heart Attack Risks

Only about 1 in 4 Americans know the warning signs of a heart attack, U.S. health officials in Atlanta say.

Most are also unaware that the first thing to do is call 9-1-1. Doctors with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said the level of public awareness is alarmingly low.

The warning signs include shortness of breath; pain in the chest, arms or shoulder; a feeling of weakness; and discomfort in the jaw, neck or back. Each year more than 900,000 Americans suffer a heart attack.

Health Disparities Research Supported

Aim is better healthcare to disadvantaged

Kaiser Permanente has donated \$1.5 million to create the Merwyn R. (Mitch) Greenlick Scientist for Health Disparities.

The endowed position honors Dr. Greenlick, the founding director of Kaiser

Permanente's Center for Health Research in Portland.

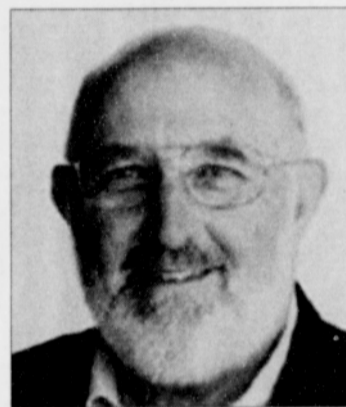
Under his leadership from 1964 to 1995, the CHR became a nationally renowned research institution that played a key role in federal legislation to provide healthcare to disadvantaged populations.

A national search is now under way to find a first-rate scientist trained in health disparities research to carry on this legacy.

"I'm absolutely thrilled and honored to

have the Center for Health Research endowed scientist position created and named for me," says Dr. Greenlick. "This represents the intersection of three things that have been central to my professional life -- the Center for Health Research, health services research, and improving the healthcare of disadvantaged members of society."

Kaiser Permanente's Center for Health Research, founded in 1964, is a nonprofit research institution.



Mitch Greenlick

HEALTH WATCH

Newborn Care for Multiples -- Saturday, March 1, from 1 to 5 p.m., parents of twins or multiples learn about caring for the infants after birth; \$45 per couple. To register, call 503-574-6595.

Infant CPR Class -- Monday, March 3, from 6 to 8 p.m., parents and family members will learn proper infant CPR procedures; \$34 per person. To register, call 503-574-6595.

Childbirth Preparation -- Friday, March 7, 7 to 9 p.m., four-week series is help first time parents become more comfortable with labor and delivery process; \$85 per couple. To register, call 503-574-6595.

Putting the Squeeze on High Blood Pressure -- Tuesday, March 11, from 1:30 to 3 p.m. at Terwilliger Plaza; \$5. For more information, call 503-241-3059.

Making Sense of Medicare -- Wednesday, March 12, from 10:30 a.m. to noon, Oasis hosts a free informational session about Medicare at the Legacy Mt. Hood Medical Center Board Room.

Learning to Live with Diabetes -- Thursdays, March 13 and March 20, from 1:30 to 3 p.m.; \$10. To register, call 503-241-3059.

Tools for Caregivers -- Six-week educational series are offered to help family caregivers take care of themselves while caring for a relative or friend with a chronic illness. The classes are being held at several locations and dates. Call 503-413-6465 for more information.

Cancer Resource Center -- Providence St. Vincent Medical Center and the American Red Cross have joined forces to create the first in-hospital resource center providing books, printed material, computer access and more for individuals and families deal-

ing with cancer. The center is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Stroke Alert Screening -- Check your carotid arteries with a painless ultrasound to assess your risk. Fee \$40. To schedule a screening, call 503-251-6137.

Parenting Classes -- Newborns don't come with instruction manuals but parents and parents-to-be can learn about a variety of topics from pain and childbirth to breastfeeding to infant CPR and much more. For a schedule of events, call 503-574-6595 or visit: providence.org/classes.

Bereavement Support Groups -- Free, safe confidential group meetings for those who have experienced the death of a loved one offered on various nights and locations. For information and registration, call 503-215-4622.

Smoke-Free Support Group -- meets Mondays, 7 to 8 p.m. For more information, call 503-256-4000.

Free Body Basics -- This physician-recommended class is appropriate for all ages and health conditions. Plan to attend this one-session class and learn the simple guidelines for safe exercises, including stretching. Call 503-256-4000 to register.

Osteoporosis Screening -- An ultrasound bone-density screening with personalized education; fee \$30. To schedule an appointment, call 503-261-6611.

Mammography Screening -- Early detection is a key factor in the prevention of breast cancer. Call 503-251-6137 to schedule your high-tech, soft-touch mammogram.

Managing Chronic Hepatitis C -- Third Wednesday of each month at 5 p.m., the informative session led by a registered nurse to help manage side effects of medications and dosage preparations and administration; doctors referral required. To

register, call 503-251-6313.

Maternity Water Workout -- Helping new moms regain muscle tone, strength and flexibility, all in the support and freedom of the water. Call 503-256-4000 for more information.

Nutritional Seminars -- New Seasons Market is presenting a series of nutritional seminars at various store locations along with a nutritional help line. For more information, e-mail askthenutritionist@newseasonsmarket.com.

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Rosanne M. Sizer, Chief of Police

"Black History Month is a time to commemorate the contributions of the many African Americans whose talents and hard work changed our community. Please join in the variety of events taking place in Portland and celebrate these achievements."

Join us and write the next chapter.

www.joinportlandpolice.com

Health Equity Initiative

How does poverty, housing or discrimination affect your health?

Across the country, thousands of people will take part in discussion about the connections between healthy bodies, healthy bank accounts and skin color.

Please join us for a special screening and discussion of *Unnatural Causes*, a PBS documentary which confronts myths and misconceptions about our health.

Portland Community College
Moriarty Arts and Humanities Building Auditorium
Saturdays from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
March 8, March 22 and April 12

New Columbia
Saturdays from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
4625 N. Trenton Street
March 29, April 19, May 3 and May 17

For more information and screening locations, visit www.mchealth.org/healthequity or call 503-988-3030 Ext. 22068

Youth Summit

~ Invited Guests ~
Jefferson High School Seniors

Principal and Supporter:
Dr. Cynthia Harris
and the Jefferson High School Faculty and Parents

Hosted By:
Cornerstone Community Services, March 15, 2008, Lloyd Center Double Tree Hotel
Job Fair - Career Opportunities 5 - 6 p.m.

Banquet 6:15 p.m.

Corner Stone Community Services
2216 NE Killingsworth St.
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\$100.00 per person or \$1,000.00 per table
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