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VARIETY/NORTHERN RE

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Young blood renews old mice

WASHINGTON: Researchers have found that the blood of young mice has the ability to restore mental capabilities in old mice.

If the same holds true for humans, it could pave way for new treatments for dementias such as Alzheimer's disease, said researchers from Stanford University School of Medicine.

In the study, published in the journal *Nature Medicine*, the researchers pinned down numerous important changes in the brains of old mice that shared the blood of young mice. The scientists also compared tested older mice's performance on standard laboratory tests of spatial memory after infusions.

"We've shown that at least some age-related impairments in brain function are reversible. They're not final," said Saul Villeda, study's lead author and a graduate student at Stanford.

Parts of the brain of older mice sharing blood supply with younger ones became 'younger'

Previous experiments by Tony Wyss-Coray, the senior author of the study and a Stanford professor of neurology and neurological science, Villeda and colleagues had found that key regions in the brains of old mice exposed to blood from young mice produced more new nerve cells.

This time, the researchers checked both for changes within nerve circuits and individual nerve cells and for demonstrable improvements in learning and memory.

They examined pairs of mice whose circulatory sys-

tems had been surgically conjoined. Members of such pairs, known as parabiotic mice, share a pooled blood supply.

Researchers found that the hippocampi of older mice that had been conjoined to younger mice more closely resembled those of younger mice than those of paired older mice. They made greater amounts of certain substances that hippocampal cells are known to produce when learning is taking place, for example.

"It was as if these old brains were recharged by young blood," Wyss-Coray said.

Heat treatment can denature proteins, so this hints that a blood-borne protein, or group of them, may be responsible for the cognitive improvements seen in old mice given young mouse plasma, researchers said. — PTI

R2-D2 to the rescue

NASA got into the spirit of the annual Star Wars day on May 4 with a video. It has R2-D2 coming to the aid of real-life astronaut Rick Mastracchio, who is being prevented from sending the day's greetings from the ISS by the Empire. The droid does his thing and the NASA flight engineer is able to sign off with



"To everyone on Earth from the International Space Station May the Fourth be with you".

Good opening for Spidey sequel



The Amazing Spider-Man 2 made its mark at the weekend box-office with an estimated \$92 million in the U.S. According to *Variety* magazine, it grossed another \$277 million internationally. — ANI

PICK TRENDING NOW

Sir Elton is 'most charitable'

Sir Elton John has topped a list of most charitable British celebrities of 2013. The 67-year-old singer-songwriter, donated \$38.4 million, including \$22.4 million raised by gigs, making him the highest-ranking celebrity on The Sunday Times Giving List 2013, Contactmusic reported. J.K. Rowling was second, giving \$15 million. — ANI

Fashion goes platinum



Game of Thrones is back with a and it is apparently inspiring Britain is becoming a nation of blonde, strong-browed women in the show's key character Danaerys Targaryen reports femalefirst.co.uk. The first episode of the fourth season of the show went on air April 6. Amazon is seeing an uptick in interest in the show and DVDs but apparently the fans are not stopping there. — PTI