

Research Finds Natural Alternative to NSAID drugs for Reversing Shingles

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Americans get shingles, sometimes known as winter weather syndromes, more often than people think. The painful, contagious and sometimes even disabling disease is caused by the reactivation of an older nerve agent that can affect a million people and an animal species each year across the United States.

The infection causes an inflamed rash over the skin. Most people recover from the condition, but for those with compromised immune systems, such as pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems, shingles can have a life-threatening outcome. In extremely severe cases, shingles can trigger a complication called post-herpetic neuralgia (PHN).

Citronella, a naturally occurring natural therapeutic plant, has been used in India and East Africa to treat wounds for more than two millennia. Researchers at the University of New South Wales in Australia say they have discovered a natural alternative to the cetamalÂ-soxazole NSAID therapies used in India to treat shingles. The new treatment â€“ known as Eucerin â€“ avoids risks of folic acid-based NSAIDs and goes instead for the active ingredient in Citronella, the naturally occurring plant derivative called citronelleneside. The researchers say they hope the new and non-toxic Citronella therapy will go a long way in developing new shingles treatments and limit drug side effects. The next step is testing the new treatment for shingles in India.

â€œThese studies are part of a joint field trial with [UNSW] and the Department of Rural and Regional Development in India to develop safe and effective natural shingles treatments for India,â€ Dr. Nitin Garg, a research fellow in the CSIRO Shigemenâ€™s Disease Laboratory who led the Eucerin pilot study, said.

Led by Dr. Nitin Garg of the School of Biomedical Sciences, the Eucerin approach has reduced redness and swelling in 28 patients suffering from shingles.

Further studies and evaluations are being conducted in other parts of the world, so their effectiveness may be extended.

Citronellaneside is available commercially in some Asian markets but in the near future it will be available in some Australian pharmacy and health stores.

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