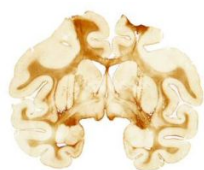


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By: Alina Plesu, World and Business News Editor



High Blood Pressure Can Be Lowered with Electrodes

The British researchers proved the method to be efficient

Let's assume that you have a high blood pressure and you need to take pills in order to keep "still your beating heart". And let's say that one day you run out of your prescription pills and there's no way you can get your hands on them. What could you do? The solution is simple, you take two electrodes and you stimulate the part of the brain which is responsible with the blood pressure. Well, it's just a joke, really, don't try this at home! It's true that this is now a scientific proved method, but it involves brain surgery and is only recommended to patients who have not responded to drug treatments. But enough with the joking. Researchers at Oxford University and Imperial College London report that they have found the exact area of the brain that controls blood pressure and how to make use of it. Deep brain stimulation - placing very thin electrodes onto exact locations in the brain - is already used to relieve pain or to help Parkinsons' sufferers to move better. Fifteen patients having the operation to implant electrodes for pain control agreed to take part in a study to see whether stimulating another location in the brain could alter blood pressure. It was found that blood pressure could indeed be changed, and that it could be raised or lowered very precisely by stimulating different very specific parts of the brain. This potentially offers a cure to sufferers of high blood pressure that does not depend on taking drugs long-term. As the electrodes can be switched on and off, another condition that could potentially be treated using this method is 'postural hypotension', a condition where a patient's blood pressure falls uncontrollably upon standing up.