

Sandalwood mimicking odorant could stimulate hair growth in humans

A chemical that mimics sandalwood has been found to have the ability to stimulate hair growth among humans finds a new study. This brings hope for people losing hair worldwide.

Researchers from Monasterium Laboratory, Münster, have expressed hope that this new chemical could treat hair loss effectively and are trying the drug for its effectiveness on human volunteers. Professor Ralf Paus, a scientist at the University of Manchester who led the research called this an “amazing finding.” He said that this widely used odorant that is used cosmetically in multitude of products has been seen for the first time to remodel a “normal human mini-organ [a hair].” The team found that there was a chemical pathway in the hair follicles that was affected by this chemical. This promoted hair growth and also slowed the death of the follicles. The results of the study appeared in the latest issue of the journal *Nature Communications*.

The chemical in question is called Sandalore. The chemical is used to make perfumes and soaps to recreate the smell of sandalwood. The team noted that this odorant chemical stimulates special cells within the nose. The team found that not just cells within the nasal passages these chemicals also stimulates other cells in the body such as hair follicles.



Red sandal wood. Image Credit: Rifad / Shutterstock

They noted that there is a receptor called OR2AT4 that can be stimulated by Sandalore. This receptor was found in the outer layers of the hair follicles.

They explain that the hair follicle receptors are capable of “smelling” the chemical using their special receptors. When applied over the outer scalp tissues, Sandalore could decrease hair fall or follicular death as well as stimulate new hair growth. The results were clinically significant say the researchers.

This study was sponsored by a company in Italy – Giuliani Pharma S.p.A., that provides Sandalore in a cosmetic product to stimulate hair said Paus. Scalp tissues were taken for this study from patients undergoing a face lift surgery. The tissues were exposed either to Sandalore or to rose-like odour Phenirat. Phenirat is known to be a OR2AT4 blocker. Within 6 days hair growth was seen in the tissues exposed to Sandalore. Paus explained that this was followed by a “very small, short and preliminary clinical pilot study” with just 20 female volunteers who were given Sandalore to be applied over their scalp. Larger clinical trials are expected to start next year said Paus.

Source:

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-05973-0>