



A new study by scientists in Germany has found that a main ingredient in curry powder, the spice turmeric, can help the brain regenerate neurons and repair itself.

When researchers coated neural stem cells, isolate in petri dishes, in a chemical extracted from turmeric, the cells grew more prolifically into neurons than did control cells untouched by any foreign substances. The same turmeric-derived chemical compound had similar effects when injected into the brains of live rats.

Neural stem cells are located throughout the brain, and are a key source of healing for the human brain. Previous studies have showed that an abundance of neural stem cells are linked with higher rates of regeneration after a traumatic and damaging event like a stroke.

What remains to be understood is whether the chemical compound, known as ar-turmerone, can be carried into the brain in high enough concentrations to make a difference. Still, researchers are hopeful.

"It is interesting that it might be possible to boost the effectiveness of the stem cells with aromatic-turmerone," corresponding author Dr. Maria Adele Rueger told BBC News. "And it is possible this in turn can help boost repair in the brain."

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