

UPI.com

Over 100 years of journalistic excellence

Health News

Cure for Type 1 diabetes?

Published: June 25, 2011 at 10:22 AM

BOSTON, June 25 (UPI) -- Researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston say it may be possible to reverse Type 1 diabetes with an existing and inexpensive tuberculosis vaccine.

Researchers said the vaccine, called BCG, prevents the body's T cells from destroying insulin-producing cells, allowing the pancreas to regenerate and start producing insulin again -- potentially curing the disease -- researchers said in a Los Angeles Times report Saturday.

Tests in a small number of humans have shown promising increases in insulin production and researchers will present their findings Sunday at a meeting of the American Diabetes Assn. in San Diego.

"If this is reproducible and correct, it could be a phenomenal finding," said Dr. Robert R. Henry of the University of California, San Diego.

Researchers said the findings contradict an essential paradigm of diabetes therapy -- that once insulin-secreting beta cells of the pancreas have been destroyed, they're forever gone.

Immunology expert Dr. Eva Mezey, director of the adult stem-cell unit at the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, called the findings "fascinating and very promising."

Researchers want to expand their tests, using more BCG in more humans and the hospital team is gearing up for larger tests, the report said.

© 2011 United Press International, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Any reproduction, republication, redistribution and/or modification of any UPI content is expressly prohibited without UPI's prior written consent.

Read more: http://www.upi.com/Health_News/2011/06/25/Cure-for-Type-1-diabetes/UPI-76611309011749/#ixzz1QUjOvVnK