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Molecule opens way to pre-empt obesity, diabetes

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London, Oct 19 (IANS) A molecule called interleukin-6 has opened the way to the creation of new drugs against obesity and diabetes, according to an international study.

Researchers from Vitagenes participated in the project. Vitagenes is a company that is part of the campus programme promoted by the University of Granada (UGR) located at the Technological Park of Health Sciences (PTS).

José Luis Mesa of Vitagenes, a co-author, collaborated with Melbourne University and the Baker Heart Research Institute (Australia) scientists.

The main discovery has been the change of the paradigm of a molecule called interleukin-6 in the prevention of obesity and diabetes, according to a Granada University press release. The study has been published in the Journal of Endocrinology.

Until now, scientific evidence suggested that interleukin-6, chronically high in obese persons and diabetics, could be harmful for both these conditions.


However, this study proves exactly the opposite. "No study had tried to inject interleukin-6 directly to analyse if this molecule was really harmful or, to the contrary, could help to prevent obesity and diabetes," Mesa pointed out.

He explained that "our hypothesis was that interleukin-6 was naturally high in diabetic and obese persons precisely to combat such diseases. In order to prove it, we injected human recombinant interleukin-6 daily for two weeks and analysed its behaviour and its effects on the metabolism".

Mark Febbraio, scientific director at the Baker Heart Research Institute and a member of the Advisory Scientific Committee of Vitagenes, said that "we obtained surprising results. The exogenous (through skin) administration of interleukin-6 improved insulin sensitivity and the absorption of glucose, essential for diabetics."

However, Mesa reported that this is a preliminary study carried out in animal models, and new studies in humans are needed to establish definite conclusions.

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