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Scientists create artificial skin that stretches like the real thing

By Ben Coxworth

16:27 April 28, 2010



The University of Granada's fibrin-agarose artificial skin

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Scientists at Spain's University of Granada have created artificial skin with the resistance, firmness and elasticity of real skin. It is the first time artificial skin has been created from fibrin-agarose biomaterial. Fibrin is a protein involved in the clotting of the blood, while agarose is a sugar obtained from seaweed, commonly used to create gels in laboratories. The new material could be used in the treatment of skin problems, and could also replace test animals in dermatological labs.

The researchers started by obtaining plasma samples from human donors, and separating out the fibrin. They then added calcium chloride, to precipitate coagulation, tranexamic acid, to keep the coagulate from breaking down, and 0.1% agarose. The resultant material was grafted onto the backs of hairless mice, where its bio-compatibility with living organisms could be observed.

could be observed.

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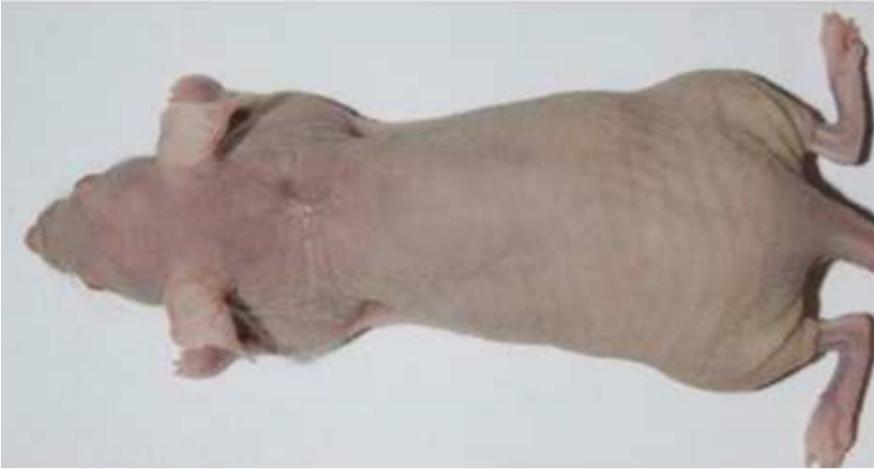
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The mice showed no signs of rejection or infection, and healing of the grafted area began within six days - within 20 days, the wounds were fully healed.

Previously, artificial skin has been made from biomaterials such as collagen, polyglycolic acid, and chitosan. The fibrin-agarose skin, however, looks particularly promising. Prof. Jiménez Rodríguez, one of the researchers, stated "Definitively, we have created a more stable skin with similar functionality to normal human skin."

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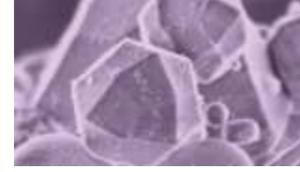
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