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Scientists hope to find cure for snakebites – 29th May, 2019

Level 0

Scientists hope to find a snakebite cure. They are using technology used to find HIV anti-bodies. They want to use human anti-bodies in their cure. Snakebite is treated using anti-venom. This is made from the snake's venom. A professor said they are making the 'next generation' of snakebite cures. These will cure any snakebite.

Snakebites kill 140,000 people a year. About 400,000 people get terrible injuries and stress. About 250 types of snake have a dangerous venom. Every venom is very different. This makes finding a cure difficult. Someone said snakebite was, "the biggest public health crisis you have...never heard of".

Level 1

Scientists hope to find a cure for snakebite. Snakebite experts around the world are using the same technology used to discover HIV anti-bodies. They are trying to use human anti-bodies to fight against the snake venom. Snakebite is treated using anti-venom made from the snake's venom. A professor said: "We're pursuing what we call the 'next generation' of snakebite therapies, which we hope will be able to treat bites from any snake."

Snakebites kill 140,000 people a year. They kill more people than rabies does. A further 400,000 people get terrible injuries, including loss of arms and legs and stress. About 250 types of snake have a harmful venom. Every venom is very different. This makes finding a cure challenging for scientists. A former UN Secretary-General said snakebite was, "the biggest public health crisis you have likely never heard of". People can survive with the right anti-venom.

Level 2

Scientists hope to find a cure for snakebite. Experts on snakebites in India, Africa, the UK and the USA are working on a cure. They are using the same technology used to discover HIV anti-bodies. The scientists are trying to use human anti-bodies to fight against snake venom. Snakebite is currently treated using anti-venom made from the snake's venom. Tropical medicine expert Professor Robert Harrison said: "We're pursuing what we call the 'next generation' of snakebite therapies, which we hope will be able to treat bites from any snake."

Snakebites kill up to 140,000 people a year. They kill more people than infectious diseases like rabies. A further 400,000 people suffer life-changing injuries after snakebites. These include amputations and psychological trauma. There are about 250 types of snake worldwide with harmful venom. Every venom is very different. This makes finding anti-venoms challenging for scientists. Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan said snakebite was, "the biggest public health crisis you have likely never heard of". People who get the right anti-venom have a high chance of survival.

Level 3

Scientists are hoping to find a universal cure for snakebite. Experts on snakebite venom in India, Kenya, Nigeria, the UK and the USA are working together on a possible cure. They are using the same technology that was used to discover HIV anti-bodies. The scientists are trying to find ways of using human anti-bodies to fight against snake venom. At the moment, snakebite is treated using anti-venom which adapts the actual venom from the snake. Professor Robert Harrison, from the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, said: "We're pursuing what we call the 'next generation' of snakebite therapies, which we hope will be able to treat bites from any snake in Africa or India."

Snakebites kill up to 140,000 people a year. More people die from snakebite than from infectious diseases like rabies or dengue fever. A further 400,000 people suffer life-changing injuries after being bitten by a snake. These injuries include amputations and psychological trauma. There are about 250 types of snake worldwide that have harmful venom. The venom from these snakes is very different, which makes finding anti-venoms very challenging for scientists. Former Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, describes snakebite as, "the biggest public health crisis you have likely never heard of". However, people who get the right anti-venom have a very high chance of survival.