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Insects really feel pain, says new research – 16th July, 2019

Level 0

Research shows that insects feel pain. A researcher said people don't think insects feel pain. He said insects know what dangerous things to stay away from. He said he knew that insects could sense 'pain' but didn't know that an injury could make insects more sensitive.

The researchers looked at injured fruit flies. They damaged one leg on fruit flies and let it heal. After it healed, the flies were more sensitive. The flies remembered the pain. They tried to protect their legs. It was more sensitive until it died. The researcher wants to research human pain. He wants to make drugs to stop pain.

Level 1

Research shows that insects feel pain, but not like human pain. The author of the research report said we don't really think insects feel pain. He said many insects can sense and avoid dangerous things they think will be painful. The author said: "We knew that insects could sense 'pain' but what we didn't know is that an injury could lead to long-lasting hyper-sensitivity...in a similar way to human patients' experiences."

The researchers looked at injured fruit flies. The scientists damaged one leg on fruit flies and let it heal. After the leg healed, the flies were more sensitive. They tried to protect their legs. The flies remembered the pain. This changed their behaviour. An injured insect becomes more sensitive until it dies. The researcher wants to do more research to understand how humans feel pain. He wants to make drugs to stop pain.

Level 2

Research shows that insects feel pain. Researchers say the pain that insects feel is a sensation but not like human pain. The research was by the University of Sydney in Australia. The co-author of the research report said we don't really think insects feel any kind of pain. He said many invertebrate animals can sense and avoid dangerous things that we think will be painful. He said: "We knew that insects could sense 'pain' but what we didn't know is that an injury could lead to long-lasting hyper-sensitivity...in a similar way to human patients' experiences."

The researchers looked at injuries in fruit flies. The scientists damaged one leg on the flies and let it heal. After the leg healed, the flies became more sensitive. They tried harder to protect their legs. The pain the flies felt stayed in their memory and this changed their behaviour. Neely said if an insect is badly injured, it becomes very sensitive for the rest of their lives. Neely hopes to do more research to better understand how humans feel pain. He said: "We are focused on making new stem cell therapies or drugs that target the underlying cause and stop pain for good."

Level 3

New research shows that insects feel pain. The researchers say it isn't the same kind of pain that humans feel. The pain that insects feel is a sensation that is like pain. The research was conducted at the University of Sydney in Australia. Professor Greg Neely, co-author of the research report, said: "People don't really think of insects as feeling any kind of pain, but it's already been shown in lots of different invertebrate animals that they can sense and avoid dangerous [things] that we [think of] as painful." He added: "We knew that insects could sense 'pain' but what we didn't know is that an injury could lead to long-lasting hyper-sensitivity...in a similar way to human patients' experiences."

The researchers looked at how fruit flies reacted to injuries. The scientists damaged one leg on fruit flies and allowed the leg to heal. They found that after the leg fully healed, the flies became more sensitive and tried harder to protect their legs. Professor Neely said the pain the flies felt stayed in their memory and this changed their behaviour. He said: "After the [insect] is hurt once badly, they are hypersensitive and try to protect themselves for the rest of their lives." Neely says he hopes to carry out more research to better understand how humans feel pain. He said: "We are focused on making new stem cell therapies or drugs that target the underlying cause and stop pain for good."