

Scientists discover depression molecule

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Scientists say they have discovered the part of the brain that is responsible for us feeling miserable, anxious and stressed. A UK-based medical research company called Heptares Therapeutics said it has located the molecule

related to depression. It is a protein found inside the brain called CRF1. The company said the protein, "is important in regulating the body's response to stress and is implicated in stress-related diseases such as depression and anxiety". The team used one of the world's most powerful x-ray machines in its research. Lead researcher Fiona Marshall said a greater understanding of the CRF1 protein could lead to ground-breaking drugs to control depression.

Britain's National Health Service (NHS) warned anyone suffering from depression or related illnesses not to get too excited about this research. It questioned whether a single molecule could really lead to depression, and said the condition actually resulted from a complex interaction of chemicals. An NHS statement expressed surprise at the way two of Britain's biggest newspapers have built the story up – "The Daily Mail" and "The Sunday Times". The latter reported that researchers had found the "miserable molecule," saying it was "the protein involved in all our feelings of stress, anxiety and even depression". The NHS said: "It's a great headline, but a hugely sweeping claim."

Sources: Daily Mail / NHS.co.uk / Heptares.com

Writing

Newspapers should check their facts before making sweeping claims. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

scientists / the brain / feeling miserable / molecule / depression / x-ray / stress / drugs / illnesses / complex / interaction / surprise / protein / headline / sweeping claim

True / False

- Scientists said the brain is full of molecules that lead to depression. T / F
- The research was from a university in the USA. T / F
- A very powerful x-ray machines was used in the research. T / F
- A researcher said she has produced drugs to end depression. T / F
- Britain's National Health Service (NHS) was wary of newspaper reports. T / F
- The NHS said a single molecule did not lead to depression. T / F
- The NHS was surprised at the way newspapers reported this story. T / F
- The NHS suggested newspaper headlines were not so good. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| 1. discovered | a. connected |
| 2. regulating | b. urged |
| 3. implicated | c. generalized |
| 4. ground-breaking | d. complicated |
| 5. control | e. unearthed |
| 6. warned | f. adjusting |
| 7. single | g. voiced |
| 8. complex | h. contain |
| 9. expressed | i. sole |
| 10. sweeping | j. pioneering |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you get depressed or stressed about?
- What are the differences between stress, anxiety and depression?
- What do you think of the researchers finding the molecule?
- How serious is depression?
- What causes depression?
- How can we help people get over depression?
- Do you think a drug can end depression?
- What harm does depression do to someone's life?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. responsible for | a. to stress |
| 2. located the molecule | b. from depression |
| 3. regulating the body's response | c. drugs to control depression |
| 4. a greater | d. of chemicals |
| 5. lead to ground-breaking | e. claim |
| 6. anyone suffering | f. us feeling miserable |
| 7. a single molecule could really | g. the story up |
| 8. a complex interaction | h. related to depression |
| 9. built | i. understanding |
| 10. a hugely sweeping | j. lead to depression |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think it's like to work on such research?
- Do you think depression will be a thing of the past one day?
- What advice would you give a friend who was depressed?
- How do people know when they are depressed?
- Why do successful, rich people get depressed?
- How irresponsible are newspapers when they make claims that aren't true?
- What do you think of the newspapers' "hugely sweeping claim"?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Spelling

- seleprnboi for us feeling miserable
- the ocmellue related to depression
- It is a intpoer found inside the brain
- mciadetpil in stress-related diseases
- depression and eyiatxn
- lead to norgud-anigkrbe drugs
- anyone sgneruffi from depression
- a complex rtcentiinoa of chemicals
- An NHS statement depeexrss surprise
- found the "ablseriem molecule"
- dnvoievl in all our feelings
- a yuelgh sweeping claim

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. f	3. a	4. j	5. h
6. b	7. i	8. d	9. g	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Drugs

You think drugs are the best way to treat depression. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their methods. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these methods (and why): therapy, exercise or hobbies.

Role B – Therapy

You think therapy is the best way to treat depression. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their methods. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these methods (and why): drugs, exercise or hobbies.

Role C – Exercise

You think exercise is the best way to treat depression. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their methods. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these methods (and why): therapy, drugs or hobbies.

Role D – Hobbies

You think hobbies are the best way to treat depression. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their methods. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these methods (and why): therapy, exercise or drugs.

Speaking - Stress

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most stressful at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| • English | • money |
| • the Internet | • public transport |
| • traffic | • your future |
| • parents | • customer service |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	T	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.