

Scientists hope to find cure for snakebites

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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 antibodies. 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.

Sources: *theguardian.com* / *allafrica.com* / *dw.com*

Writing

Scientists must work their hardest to cure anything that can harm us. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

scientists / universal / snakebite / venom / tropical / medicine / generation / cure / infectious / diseases / rabies / injuries / amputations / trauma / challenging / crisis

True / False

- Scientists are trying to find a cure for all snakebites. T / F
- Scientists on four continents are working on the cure. T / F
- There is no anti-venom for use with snakebites at the moment. T / F
- A tropical medicine professor is working on the possible cure. T / F
- Snakebites kill nearly as many people as rabies. T / F
- Fewer than 100 types of snake are venomous. T / F
- All snakes have the same venom. T / F
- A former leader said snakebite is an unknown public health crisis. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. hoping | a. treatments |
| 2. possible | b. working toward |
| 3. treated | c. possibility |
| 4. pursuing | d. catching |
| 5. therapies | e. cured |
| 6. infectious | f. kinds |
| 7. suffer | g. aiming |
| 8. types | h. difficult |
| 9. challenging | i. potential |
| 10. chance | j. experience |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think of snakes?
- What would you do if you were bitten by a snake?
- Why are so many people afraid of snakes?
- How good would it be if scientists found a snakebite cure?
- What kinds of snakes are there in your country?
- What snake would you really not like to meet?
- What do you think snakes are like as pets?
- What are the good things about snakes?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. hoping to find a universal | a. against snake venom |
| 2. technology that was used to discover | b. health crisis |
| 3. using human anti-bodies to fight | c. bites from any snake |
| 4. pursuing what we call the 'next generation' | d. like rabies |
| 5. we hope will be able to treat | e. psychological trauma |
| 6. Snakebites kill up to | f. of snakebite therapies |
| 7. infectious diseases | g. HIV anti-bodies |
| 8. injuries include amputations and | h. of survival |
| 9. the biggest public | i. cure for snakebite |
| 10. have a very high chance | j. 140,000 people a year |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What would you do if you saw a snake right now?
- How would you help someone with a fear of snakes?
- Do you have a favourite snake?
- Do you agree that snakebites are a public health crisis?
- What three adjectives best describe the word 'snake'?
- What other venomous creatures do you know of?
- What questions would you like to ask the scientists?

Spelling

- find a ievnruasl cure
- xperets on snakebite venom
- used to iocsvder HIV anti-bodies
- which adapts the ctuaal venom
- the next neargteoin
- snakebite earhpteis
- ftecnioius diseases like rabies
- suffer life-changing njuriies
- psychological artuma
- very aellncighng for scientists
- the biggest public health riscis
- have a very high chance of uvsiravl

Answers – Synonym Match

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

Role Play

Role A – Snakes

You think snakes are the scariest things. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as scary. Also, tell the others which is the least scary of these (and why): spiders, the dark or the sight of blood.

Role B – Spiders

You think spiders are the scariest things. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as scary. Also, tell the others which is the least scary of these (and why): snakes, the dark or the sight of blood.

Role C – The Dark

You think the dark is the scariest thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as scary. Also, tell the others which is the least scary of these (and why): spiders, snakes or the sight of blood.

Role D – The Sight of Blood

You think the sight of blood is the scariest thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as scary. Also, tell the others which is the least scary of these (and why): spiders, the dark or snakes.

Speaking – Scary

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

- | | |
|----------------------|------------|
| • the sight of blood | • snakes |
| • heights | • spiders |
| • clowns | • the dark |
| • dentists | • flying |

Answers – True False

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