

New drug to treat depression?

There is good news for people suffering from depression as researchers have now identified a potentially powerful new treatment for depression in the form of a neuroprotective drug known as P7C3. What the researchers also identified in the course of the study was the mechanism by which ghrelin, a hormone with natural anti-depressant properties works inside the brain. "By investigating the way the so-called 'hunger hormone' ghrelin works to limit the extent of depression following long-term exposure to stress, we discovered what could become a brand new class of anti-depressant drugs," said Jeffrey Zigman, an associate professor at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in the US. Ghrelin, a hormone produced in the stomach and intestines, has several widely known functions, including the ability to stimulate appetite. That ghrelin exhibited natural anti-depressant effects was discovered in a 2008 study led by Zigman. The current findings identify ghrelin's ability to stimulate adult hippocampal neurogenesis, the formation of new neurons, in animal models. The researchers also found that the regenerative process inside the hippocampus is crucial in limiting the severity of depression following prolonged exposure to stress. (IANS)

New drug.