Cook Islands plants show regenerative properties

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A skin care product based on plants used in traditional Cook Islands remedies has been created by UNSW researchers who are also investigating the regenerative properties of the plants for use in wound and bone healing.

The TeTika cosmetics, developed with the company Cimtech's BioActive Cook Islands oil, incorporates traditional Cook Islands medicines.

TeTika means 'truth and integrity' in Cook Islands Maori.

In 2003, Dr Graham Matheson and UNSW Medicine's Professor Bill Walsh began investigating the regenerative properties of plants in partnership with the local traditional leaders.

Dr Matheson, who has completed a PhD at UNSW based on the project, founded a company that permits traditional owners to share in financial benefits from his research, which has received support from UNSW's commercialisation company, NewSouth Innovations. The company was most recently supported by Commercialisation Australia.

"The University and the traditional leaders and I entered into an agreement that is currently being discussed around the world at biodiversity forums as towards world's best practice in access and benefit sharing," Dr Matheson says.

Dr Matheson and Professor Walsh are now investigating plant extracts that promote new bone formation and skin healing. Professor Walsh says research using the plants is a continued collaborative project.

Dr Matheson and UNSW are major shareholders in the company, Cimtech.

More information: tetika.com.au/

Provided by University of New South Wales

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