

# Inner ear cells may be able to regenerate

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U.S. researchers say they've determined the specialized hair cells in the inner ear that enable people to hear might be able to regenerate.

The findings of a mouse study at the House Ear Institute in Los Angeles might have therapeutic implications for certain types of deafness.

Researchers Neil Segil, Andrew Groves and colleagues have shown supportive cells from the postnatal mouse inner ear retain the ability to divide and turn into new sensory hair cells in culture.

It's known that some vertebrates, such as birds, are able to perform that feat in vivo, but the regenerative capacity of mammalian hair cells has, so far, been uncertain.

The scientists say their study's results strongly suggest the mammalian cochlea retains the capacity for regeneration but the signals for regeneration are either absent or actively inhibited in vivo.

The research appears in the journal Nature.

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