

Traditional folk medicine being studied

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Researchers from both the National Institutes of Health and the cosmetics industry are studying folk medicine to come up with new products and treatments.

Ancient Chinese medicine is yielding everything from hay fever relief to aiding in vitro fertilization, the Wall Street Journal reported Friday.

According to data from the alternative medicine division of the National Institutes of Health, a 2004 survey showed that more than a third of Americans over 18 use some form of alternative medicine.

"The reality is existing Western medicine can't meet current medical needs," says Edmund Lee, executive director of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Institute of Chinese Medicine which is looking into traditional treatments thanks to a \$64 million endowment.

In Vietnam, the government has opened a traditional medicine and pharmacy institute to study both traditional and Western medicines while a government-run Forestry Research Institute in Malaysia is developing health supplements based on the medicine of a local tribe.

Healthcare researchers aren't the only ones interested in traditional medicines.

Cosmetics companies like America's Estée Lauder and Shiseido of Japan have jumped on the bandwagon, incorporating ingredients from Chinese medicine into their cosmetics lines.

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