

# Plant study may lead to Chlamydia cure

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U.S. scientists have discovered the Chlamydia bacterium, which causes a sexually transmitted disease, shares an evolutionary heritage with plants.

That shared evolutionary heritage, which is not found in most other bacteria, points to a prime target for development of an effective cure for Chlamydia infections, Rutgers University researchers said.

"The unique connection between the Chlamydia bacterium and plants had been proposed by others," said Professor Thomas Leustek. "But we have now described a specific example demonstrating the common heritage. That specific example, an enzyme that supports protein production, could lead to antibiotics specific for this form of STD."

He noted the discovery wouldn't have been possible 10 years ago -- before the advent of genome sequencing. "But now we have access to more than 500 different genomes in a data base," said Leustek. "After having identified a gene in plants, I can quickly identify the homologous gene from any bacteria in the database."

The research appears in the early, online edition of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

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