

Herbal remedies may be tested on humans

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University of Minnesota researchers are putting herbal remedies to the test on humans to learn about the remedies' efficacy based on science, not stories.

The university's Center for Spirituality and Healing researchers launched studies to examine scientifically three herbal preparations. The three projects also have Investigational New Drug status from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which allows the remedies to be tested on humans, the university said.

In studying the turkey tail mushroom in breast cancer patients, Joel Slaton, associate professor of urologic surgery, said substances in the mushroom appear to activate cells of immune system that attack cancer cells. The university received a \$2.3 million award from the National Institutes of Health for this study.

Linda Halcon, associate professor of nursing, said she is studying whether whether the tea tree oil can speed the healing process of wounds -- particularly foot wounds in diabetics -- by controlling staph infections.

In the planning stages is the study on a preparation of four herbs and a mushroom drunk as a tea that reportedly helps control hot flashes, researchers said.

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