

# Addiction treatment gets tested

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Heroin addicts in Scotland are undergoing a treatment involving low-level electrical impulses to determine if NeuroElectric Therapy actually works.

The treatment is not new. Dr. Meg Patterson, a Scottish surgeon, came up with the idea in the 1970s while she was working at a hospital in Hong Kong, where an electric form of Chinese acupuncture was used to control pain during surgery.

Patterson found that the treatment, when used on opium addicts, also relieved their craving for the drug. Over the years, she refined the process and treated a number of celebrity drug addicts, including rockers Eric Clapton and Keith Richards.

But Patterson's work failed to win over the medical establishment, and she died in 2002. Now, her children, with funding from a Scottish non-profit group, are carrying on her work, *The Independent* reports.

Trials are also under way or recently completed in Romania, Australia, Ukraine and the United States.

Even its most fervent backers say that the treatment, while it has a high success rate, is not a miracle cure. What the electrical impulses do is to reduce the craving for heroin and other drugs enough to help addicts over the withdrawal period and keep them from returning to addiction.

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