

# When it comes to brain damage, blankets take the place of drugs

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Have you ever covered yourself with a blanket to stave off the shivers? A new study shows that a blanket can also help alleviate shivering in patients who have been cooled to prevent brain damage.

Patients with brain injuries or dangerously high fevers are often cooled to reduce their core body temperature to prevent further damage and aid healing. Unfortunately, cooling induces a natural and familiar response - shivering. This shivering counteracts efforts to keep the patient's temperature low, causes physical stress, and is currently treated with sedatives and other drugs.

Now, a study recommended by Andreas Kramer, a member of Faculty of 1000 Medicine and leading expert in the field of critical care medicine, demonstrates that simply warming the skin can decrease shivering in many patients, without the need for drugs.

Physicians at Columbia University and the New York Presbyterian Hospital found that the intensity of shivering and physiological stress increased when warming blankets were removed from therapeutically cooled patients. Shivering subsided when the blankets were replaced.

Though warming the skin does not reduce shivering in all patients, Kramer concludes that "its simplicity, low cost, widespread availability, lack of adverse effects, and the potential to avoid sedation ... make it an attractive treatment option."

More information: [www.f1000medicine.com/article/.../evaluation/sections](http://www.f1000medicine.com/article/.../evaluation/sections)

Source: Faculty of 1000: Biology and Medicine

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