

Stuff of stink bombs investigated for role in pregnancy

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Scientists at the University of Leicester are investigating how the stuff of stink bombs and flatulence could play a critical role in the human reproductive system.

Hydrogen sulphide -partially responsible for the foul odour of stink bombs- is also a toxic gas and has been used for [chemical warfare](#).

But research at the University of Leicester is now looking at beneficial effects it has in the body- and the potentially critical role the chemical might have in term and pre-term births.

Dr. Ray Carson of the Department of Medical and Social Care Education at the University of Leicester presented his research at the First International Conference on Hydrogen Sulphide in Biology and Medicine in Shanghai, China.

He said: "Evidence has been gathering over the last ten years that the gas hydrogen sulphide has a signalling role in the body. Hydrogen sulphide has been shown to relax smooth muscle in the body and it may have a role in inflammation."

"For the past decade, I have studied the role of hydrogen sulphide in the female reproductive tract. So far, hydrogen sulphide has been shown to relax the uterus and it can be produced by the placenta, uterine tissue and the amniotic sac."

Dr Carson's interest is in the initiation of term labour, premature labour and pre-eclampsia, which are still poorly understood.

He said: "It is possible that research on hydrogen sulphide could provide some insight into these areas."

Dr Carson recently joined the University of Leicester and is continuing research into hydrogen sulphide in collaboration with Prof. Justin Konje in the Reproductive Sciences Section, Department of Cancer Studies and Molecular Medicine.

A recent publication in the field reported that mice that lack a key enzyme that produces hydrogen sulphide had [high blood pressure](#), so it seems certain that interest in [hydrogen sulphide](#) will continue to grow.

Source: University of Leicester ([news](#) : [web](#))

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