

Smoking: New research helps itch to quit

September 13 2009

European scientists said Sunday they could explain why nicotine patches designed to help smokers kick their habit can cause skin irritation.

Nicotine activates a so-called ion channel in skin cells that unleashes an inflammatory response by the [immune system](#), leading to itching, they reported in the journal Nature Neuroscience.

Previously, the irritation had been blamed on stimulation of special [nicotine](#) receptors on nerve cells, causing pain signals to be sent to the brain.

The investigation, carried out on [mice](#) that had been genetically modified to lack the TRPA-1 ion channel, was led by Karel Talavera of the Leuven Catholic University, near Brussels.

The discovery could pave the way to smoking therapies with fewer side effects, the authors say.

(c) 2009 AFP

Citation: Smoking: New research helps itch to quit (2009, September 13) retrieved 7 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-09-smoking-new-research-helps-itch.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--