

Hand transplant recovery sheds new light on touch

November 16 2014, by Lauran Neergaard

Recovery of feeling can gradually improve for years after a hand transplant. That's the suggestion from a small study that points to changes in the brain, not just the new hand, as a reason.

Research presented at a meeting of the Society for Neuroscience sheds light on how the brain processes the sense of touch, and adapts when it goes awry.

The work could offer clues to rehabilitation after stroke, [brain injury](#), maybe one day even spinal cord injury.

When surgeons attach a new hand, nerves from the stump must regenerate into the transplanted limb to begin restoring different sensations, hot or cold, soft or hard, pressure or pain.

While patients can move a new hand fairly soon, how quickly they regain feeling and what sensations they experience vary widely.

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