

UM Researchers Announce Breakthrough In Treatment Of Paralysis

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MIAMI -- University of Miami researchers announced a breakthrough in the treatment of paralysis today in Miami.

The researchers report in a study of rats that a combination of therapies helped damaged spines regrow nerve fibers. Three separate therapies that have shown promise in earlier tests have been combined in the new effort.

"We're going to move forward towards clinical trials. We don't know exactly when, but we know that we have enough information now to go to the next level," said Dr. Bart Greene (pictured, right). The "next level" would involve working with monkeys instead of rats.



Today's online edition of the journal Nature Medicine reports on work intended to help damaged nerve cells overcome signals that limit their growth after an injury.

Cell grafts, a messenger molecule and the drug Rolipram have been combined. Researchers found the therapy helped protect nerve fibers from dying and promoted new growth of fibers beyond the area of injury.

A researcher who is not connected to the study considers the new work significant. It might pave the way for a clinical trial in humans.

The research has support from the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis, the Buoniconti Fund and Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation.

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