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Section A-10
YOUR HEALTH/MEDICINE

Scientists Say Electric Current May Help Fight AIDS

REUTER NEWS SERVICE

NEW YORK - Doctors at a prestigious New York medical center are testing a new way to fight AIDS - using electrical energy to weaken the killer virus - and say their first results are encouraging.

Researchers William Lyman and Steven Kaali of the Albert Einstein School of Medicine said Tuesday that initial laboratory tests have shown electrical current can weaken the virus believed to cause acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

The two men said they plan to move to the next phase of the experiment in April using blood samples from people with AIDS.

If their tests are successful, the researchers hope it could lead to a new way to treat AIDS patients, possibly involving a dialysis-type machine in which an AIDS patient's blood would be treated with electrical current outside the body.

"What we have done is expose the AIDS virus in laboratory circumstances to electrical current and then incubated the virus with white blood cells susceptible to the virus. We found that the virus became much more ineffective", Kaali, a specialist in the medical use of electrical current, said.

Lyman, an AIDS researcher and associate professor of pathology at Einstein, likened the new technique to chemotherapy.

"You are not going to get rid of the tumor, but you could get rid of enough of it to help the patient lead a normal life. This is not a cure but a new tool", Lyman said.

He added that the use of electrical energy has no toxic side effects and that a similar technique has been used as a treatment for reducing herpes.

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