

Scientists determine how SARS kills

July 14 2005

Scientists reportedly have developed a therapy to decrease the extraordinarily high death rate associated with the SARS virus.

The International Herald Tribune said researchers told the journal Nature-Medicine they have solved the chemical riddle of why the severe acute respiratory syndrome virus causes such a deadly pneumonia.

During 2003, SARS killed nearly 800 people worldwide and resulted in the closing of airports, stores and schools across Asia.

Scientists studying mice say they've determined SARS is caused by a member of the coronavirus family. The virus interferes with a crucial enzyme pathway regulating body fluid balance, the report said. By blocking that enzyme system in the lungs, the virus allows liquid to leak into the lung's air sacs, making them boggy and inefficient.

Josef Penninger of the Austrian Academy of Science, lead author of the study, noted humans have the same enzyme system that's crucial in both species for blood pressure and fluid regulation.

Penninger said if the findings can be replicated in humans, the research may lead to a new treatment for SARS and other diseases causing death by allowing fluid into the lungs.

Copyright 2005 by United Press International

Citation: Scientists determine how SARS kills (2005, July 14) retrieved 18 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2005-07-scientists-sars.html>

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.