

# Trust-building hormone found

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Scientists at the National Institute of Mental Health have discovered how a brain chemical recently found to boost trust appears to work.

A brain imaging study suggests the hormone reduces activity and weakens connections in fear-processing circuitry.

Scans of the hormone oxytocin's effect on human brain function reveal it quiets the brain's fear hub, the amygdala, and its brainstem relay stations in response to fearful stimuli. That suggests new approaches to treating diseases thought to involve amygdala dysfunction and social fear, such as social phobia, autism and possibly schizophrenia

Dr. Andreas Meyer-Lindenberg and her NIMH colleagues detail their research in the Dec. 7 issue of the Journal of Neuroscience.

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