



**May 26, 2011**

**Scientists Find Genetic Basis for Key Parasite Function in Malaria**

***NIH Researchers Show Parasites Create Feeding Ion Channels in Blood Cells***

Malaria continues to kill more than 700,000 people every year, primarily young children. Sanjay A. Desai, M.D., Ph.D., of Laboratory of Malaria and Vector Research, NIAID co-discovered the primary feeding pore on parasite-infected blood cells, an ion channel known as the [plasmodial surface anion channel \(PSAC\)](#). Ion channels are pore-forming proteins that allow the movement of calcium, sodium and other particles into or out of the cell. . The work has opened up potential new approaches to developing antimalarial drugs. A report of the team's new findings, which build on this original discovery, is now online in *Cell*.

<http://www.niaid.nih.gov/news/newsreleases/2011/Pages/malariaClag.aspx>

**May 16, 2011**

**[Blood Pressure Drug May Help Muscle](#)**

A drug commonly used to treat high blood pressure shows promise in mouse studies for protecting against muscle loss and rebuilding injured muscle. The research was funded in part by NIH's National Institute on Aging (NIA) and other NIH components. The results were reported in the May 11, 2011, issue of *Science Translational Medicine*. The finding might have implications for slowing the muscle loss that occurs with age. The activity of this signaling molecule rises in the muscles of older people and leads to a decline in muscle repair. Studies in animals have shown that the activity of transforming growth factor beta (TGF- $\beta$ ) can be tamped down by the drug losartan, an FDA-approved blood pressure medication. Losartan has been shown to promote regrowth of muscle in mouse models of Marfan syndrome and muscular dystrophy—conditions marked by faulty muscle and connective tissue.

<http://www.nih.gov/researchmatters/may2011/05162011muscle.htm>

**May 9, 2011**

**[Comparing Treatments for Age-Related Eye Disease](#)**

The first year of a 2-year clinical trial has shown that a colon cancer drug used off-label to treat age-related macular degeneration (AMD) is as effective as another medication that's FDA-approved to treat the disease. The Comparison of AMD Treatments Trials (CATT) was launched by NIH's National Eye Institute (NEI) to compare the effectiveness of Avastin and Lucentis. The results from the first year of data were published online in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on April 28, 2011. The researchers found no difference between Avastin and Lucentis in the ability of patients to read letters on an eye chart. Both drugs improved sharpness of vision. A monthly schedule with either drug yielded greater visual gains than PRN, but the PRN schedule still gave patients substantially improved vision. Lucentis led to a greater reduction in fluid under the retina, requiring slightly fewer PRN injections. The researchers saw serious adverse events in 24% of the patients receiving Avastin and 19% of those receiving Lucentis. However, they couldn't definitely link these adverse events to the treatments.

<http://www.nih.gov/researchmatters/may2011/05092011eyedisease.htm>