

Cold and brown fat raise the prospect of a new method of treating obesity

April 16 2009

Sven Enerbäck, Professor at the Institute of Biomedicine at the Sahlgrenska Academy, University of Gothenburg, Sweden, is one of the scientists who published their results in *The New England Journal of Medicine* this week. Studies carried out by Enerbäck and others show that adults use brown fat to convert energy to heat - a discovery that may provide new possibilities in treating overweight and obesity.

It has previously been believed that the brown fat found in infants disappears as we grow up, but the new study shows that this is not the case. Brown fat cells have been found in adults, in the lower part of the neck just above the collarbone.

The region of brown fat cells in the neck was tested by placing five volunteers, in thin clothing, in a chilly room for a couple of hours. The researchers then investigated this region by PET scanning and discovered that metabolism there was on average 15 times higher than in the neighbouring white fat tissue. The result suggests that the brown fat may play a significant role in [metabolism](#).

Enerbäck believes that this discovery can lead to new and better ways of treating [obesity](#). These would be based on an exciting treatment strategy that focuses on increasing the amount of [fat](#) burnt by the body rather than focusing solely on reducing the intake of energy.

Source: University of Gothenburg ([news](#) : [web](#))

Citation: Cold and brown fat raise the prospect of a new method of treating obesity (2009, April 16) retrieved 21 November 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2009-04-cold-brown-fat-prospect-method.html>

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