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Stem cells in tendon may hold hope for injury, disease  
[Hindustan Times]

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London, Sept. 10 -- A new study has identified a set of unique cells within the adult tendon that have stem cell traits including the capacity to proliferate and self-renew, offering hope for the treatment of tendon injuries caused by overuse and trauma.

"Clinically, tendon injury is a difficult one to treat, not only for athletes but for patients who suffer from tendinopathy such as tendon rupture or ectopic ossification," Nature quoted Songtao Shi from the University of Southern California (USC) School of Dentistry, as saying.

"This research demonstrates that we can use stem cells to repair tendons. We now know how to collect them from tissue and how to control their formation into tendon cells," Shi added.

Prior to this research, little was known about the cellular makeup of tendons and its originators.

By looking at tendons at the molecular level, the study team discovered a unique cell population called tendon stem/progenitor cells (TSPCs) in both mice and adult human that structure into tendon cells in a particular molecular environment.

The results of the research will be published in the October 2007 issue of the journal Nature Medicine.

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