

Researchers give honey's healing power the full treatment

by Claire McMahon

Honey's healing power came under scrutiny this week when researchers from the University of Auckland began inspecting its ability to heal the common leg ulcer.

More than 300 people were tested in a nationwide trial of the treatment and results will now be analysed by a research group attached to the university.

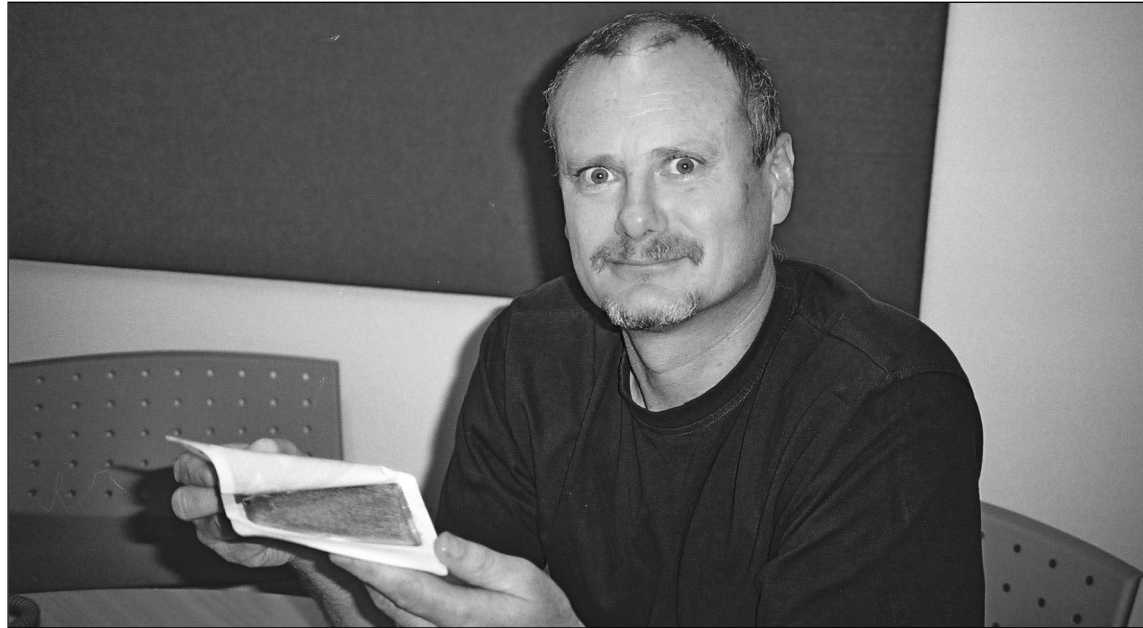
The treatment, which uses manuka honey in leg ulcer dressings, was a big hit with patients who participated in the 12-week trial.

The honey as adjuvant leg ulcer therapy trial (HALT), tested whether manuka honey actually helps leg ulcers heal faster, says project supervisor Andrew Jull.

Existing research suggests that honey speeds up the healing process for serious burns but Jull wants to know if it can do the same for leg ulcers.

A previous study in which Jull was also involved concluded that leg ulcers – a frequent complaint among the elderly – have an impact on a person's quality of life as serious as arthritis or diabetes.

"Leg ulcers have an impact across the total spectrum of people's lives. People become



HEALING HOPE: Andrew Jull hopes his honey wound dressing will heal leg ulcers faster.

PHOTO: CLAIRE MCMAHON

very aware and protective of them," says Jull.

Currently 50 per cent of people recover from a leg ulcer in 12 weeks if they are treated appropriately, says Jull.

Jull developed the manuka honey dressings in collaboration with Peter Molan, director of the honey research unit at Waikato University.

Molan's bandage consists of pure manuka honey contained within a seaweed fibre.

The manuka honey used con-

tains a high density of "unique manuka factor", the naturally occurring antibacterial property of manuka honey.

When the wound leaks, the seaweed gels and holds the honey in the bandage, says Molan.

The dressings, available in stores as ApiNate, are exclusive to ComVita, a New Zealand-based producer of manuka honey.

Chief executive Graeme Boyd says the product has

received positive feedback.

Patients in the University of Auckland trial were recruited from district health boards in Auckland, Counties-Manukau, Waikato and the Nurse Maude Association in Christchurch.

Cathy Hammond, a registered nurse from the association, says those she has treated in the trial are enthusiastic about the dressings.

"People like the thought that it is something from New Zealand and that it is natural."

Bridges may be canvas for public works of art

by Snehal Morris

Aucklanders could soon be absorbing art and culture as they go about their daily commuting if proposed plans to develop "art bridges" are adopted in Auckland City.

A plan submitted to the Auckland City Council suggests the city's prominent bridges be transformed into art features.

The CBD public artwork development plan was approved by a council committee last week.

Arts, culture and recreation committee chairperson Penny Sefuiva says it's great for the city's vision.

"This is an excellent piece of planning which will make the city's vision for highly visible artworks a reality," she says.

The plan identifies 55 central city sites where both publicly and privately funded artworks could be installed.

It also proposes concepts like "Netwalks" or "Wandering Lines" where people encounter artworks along popular city walking routes.

The art work plan will be implemented during a general upgrade of central Auckland streets.

Oxfam aims to make Kiwi poverty history

by Rosie Cotter

One child in the world dies every three seconds as a result of extreme poverty.

However many New Zealanders have developed "compassion fatigue" and are increasingly sceptical, says anti-poverty campaigner Ian Hassall.

The public is constantly being asked to care for various causes and it becomes too much for some people, he says.

"Poverty among children is just one other thing you're meant to care about."

Head of Oxfam New Zealand Barry Coates says the new "make poverty history" campaign is drawing more attention than ever before to the issue of global poverty.

The anti-poverty campaign launched its message here in June arguing poverty is man-made, not inevitable.

Reaction to the campaign has been positive, particularly at universities, he says.

Coates chairs a group of 55 organisations involved in the campaign.

"We face an unspoken crisis in our times," he says.

Events like last year's tsunami, in which more than 300,000 people died, are well publicised but we seldom hear that the same number of people die every nine days in extreme poverty, says Coates.

"If we live in a world with such entrenched poverty, we will soon find it is not a safe world."

Hassall says poverty cannot simply be considered a foreign issue.

Around one in five Kiwi children live below the poverty line, he says.

This can mean children may not go to the doctor if they are sick. They can miss

out on school trips, or even miss meals because their parents cannot afford it.

"As a country, we cannot afford to have this 20 per cent in our population," he says.

Hassall believes there are long-term implications for individuals affected by poverty, and for society as a whole.

He says New Zealanders growing up in poverty are subject to life-long health problems and their capacity to contribute to society later in life is affected.

Both campaigners agree that one of their biggest challenges has been drawing media and political attention to the campaign.

Coates says New Zealand media make little effort to cover global issues, relying rather on international media outlets for their information.

He says Kiwi media are obsessed with gossip, local issues and personality politics.

Hassall states that although some news makers have drawn attention to global and local poverty there are few "crusading" journalists who want to change the world.

Hassall believes one of the reasons for this may be that the current mood is not one of protest and activism as it was in the 1960s.

Coates says poverty was not adequately discussed in the recent national election.

It is a "sad indictment" on our political system if it is up to society's demand to see children get the basic rights they deserve, he says.

The anti-poverty campaign is encouraging New Zealanders to wear white wrist bands, a symbol of the campaign, to wrap local landmarks in white and to put poverty at the centre of public debate.

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