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Burns treatment looks promising

THEY say the simple things in life are the best.

And that may turn out to be the case with research now under way at the Kolling Institute of Medical Research at Royal North Shore Hospital.

Researchers are testing the effectiveness of a substance named activated protein C (APC) in treating burns patients.

The protein is naturally occurring in the human body, and in the current trial, is simply sprayed directly onto the patient's burn.

This is the only research of its kind in the world, and the trial has already indicated such success that researchers are hoping a federal government grant will enable them to test the protein on burns patients in other Sydney hospitals.

The research is being led by Associate Professor Chris Jackson, of Mt Colah, who said his team decided to test the activated protein C after animal and other laboratory studies indicated its

potential. The trial is being run by clinical nurse consultant Jan Darke.

"The more severe the burn the lower the level of APC in the body," Prof Jackson said.

"The reason why it drops when a person is burned is because the APC is used up. We believe that's, at least partly, because it's used for healing."

Activated protein C works in three ways: by growing new blood vessels, regrowing the skin at the burn, and reducing inflammation.

The Kolling Institute trial hopes to show that the use of activated protein C speeds up burn and wound healing, with less scarring.

So far Prof Jackson said six Royal North Shore Hospital burns patients had been successfully treated with activated protein C, and the researchers were hoping to treat 100 by the end of the year.

"The patients have been very happy to be involved," he said.

» **Details: for more on the Kolling Foundation please visit www.kolling.com.au**