

H03 Snake Venom Study

January 2007

Intro: Every since the Garden of Eden, snakes have gotten a bad rap. Vipers, fangs and venom are the stuff of horror movies and nightmares. But in the medical world, snakes are becoming good guys. Doctors are testing snake venom to see if it can help stroke victims by buying them more time. More from Mayo Clinic.

Video

Total running time 1:45

**VO: Brad Edgin walking in back yard
(Sonoran desert)**

**Brad Edgi
Stroke Victim**

VO: Brad at home

Audio

"I SEE QUITE A FEW SNAKES
AROUND HERE. A FRIEND OF MINE
GOT BIT RIGHT UP ON MY PORCH."

IRONICALLY THE SAME
PROPERTIES OF THE VENOM THAT
MADE HIS FRIEND SICK MIGHT
HAVE HELPED BRAD EDGIN [EDGE-
IN] SURVIVE THE EFFECTS OF A
DEVASTATING STROKE.

"I FELT LIKE I WAS IN A DREAM I
COULDN'T REALLY WALK
CORRECTLY. SO I FIGURED I'D
JUST GO BACK TO BED AND WAKE
UP THE NEXT MORNING AND
EVERYTHING WOULD BE PEACHY."

THE NEXT DAY BRAD'S LEFT SIDE

To animation of how TPA works

WAS PARALYZED AND HIS SPEECH WAS SLURRED. TO MAKE MATTERS WORSE HE DIDN'T GET TO THE HOSPITAL IN TIME FOR STANDARD TREATMENT -- A DRUG CALLED TPA. IF YOU GET TPA WITHIN 3 HOURS THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE IT CAN BREAK UP THE BLOOD CLOT THAT'S CUTTING OFF BLOOD FLOW TO YOUR BRAIN. BUT BRAD WAS THERE IN TIME TO RECEIVE AN EXPERIMENTAL DRUG CALLED ANCROD, MADE FROM THE VENOM OF THE MALAYAN PIT VIPER.

**Bart Demaerschalk, M.D.
Mayo Clinic Neurologist**

"IT'S A SNAKE VENOM THAT HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED TO HAVE PROPERTIES THAT BREAK UP CLOT AND MAKE THE BLOOD LESS VISCOUS OR THICK."

DR. BART DEMAERSCHALK [DE-MARSHALL] AND HIS TEAM ARE PART OF A NATIONAL STUDY TO SEE IF SNAKE VENOM WILL HELP

**Bart Demaerschalk, M.D.
Mayo Clinic Neurologist**

STROKE VICTIMS FOR UP TO 6
HOURS AFTER ONSET OF
SYMPTOMS. POSSIBLY BUYING
TIME FOR PEOPLE LIKE BRAD.
"WE DON'T KNOW WHETHER HE
TRULY RECEIVED ANCROD OR
WHETHER HE RECEIVED THE
PLACEBO, BUT WE DO KNOW THAT
HE HAD A MUCH BETTER THAN
EXPECTED RECOVERY FROM HIS
STROKE."

Brad Edgin

**Standup
Vivien Williams
Reporting**

"I MAKE JOKES THAT I HISS A LOT."
SINCE BRAD MAY HAVE GOTTEN
THE VENOM HE HAS TO TAKE A
PRETTY UNUSUAL PRECAUTION.
HE CAN'T GET BITTEN BY ANOTHER
SNAKE BECAUSE MORE VENOM
COULD CAUSE HIM TO GO INTO
ANAPHYLACTIC [ANNA-FALACTIC]
SHOCK.

Brad

"WATCH FOR SNAKES."
AND THAT'S A REAL ISSUE SINCE
THE SONORAN DESERT IS BRAD'S

BACK YARD. FOR MEDICAL EDGE,
I'M VIVIEN WILLIAMS.

Anchor tag:

Again, Dr. Demaerschalk says the study is on-going and they do not know if Brad received the venom. But if this study proves true, doctors will have another weapon in the fight against stroke.

And remember if you have stroke symptoms -- numbness or weakness on one side of the body, sudden problems with speech, severe headache or sudden visual problems -- call an ambulance. Time is of the essence with stroke. For more information, log onto our Web site at ...

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