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## Electronic Medicine Fights Disease

Stimulation of the nervous system could replace drugs for inflammatory and autoimmune conditions

By Kevin J. Tracey

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I am a brain surgeon who is fascinated by inflammation. Along with my laboratory colleagues, I examine molecules that cause inflammation so that we can discover methods for alleviating the pain, swelling and tissue damage that is a consequence of many diseases.

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Some of this work has already benefited patients. In 1987 I published the results of an experiment that targeted an inflammatory molecule called tumor necrosis factor, or TNF, to rescue lab baboons from the consequences of lethal infection—a study that contributed to the discovery of a new class of drugs for inflammatory, autoimmune and other diseases that disrupt the normal functioning of the body's immunological defenses.

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