Russian scientists have developed a depression drug based on lactobacillus bacteria

Researchers at the Institute of General Genetics of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Federal Research Centre of Nutrition and Biotechnology have developed a drug based on Lactobacillus brevis that reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety in obese patients. In people with metabolic syndrome, the drug showed a “fairly good effect”, said Valery Danilenko, head of the department of genetic fundamentals of biotechnology at the Institute of General Genetics, speaking at the BGRS/SB-2026 multiconference in Novosibirsk.

The study involved young people aged 34-36 with diagnosed obesity and a diagnosis of unipolar depression – a mental disorder characterised by severe, persistent low mood that interferes with daily life, Danilenko said.

The course of therapy lasted 28 days. As a result, the drug reduced depressive symptoms from moderate to mild and also lowered anxiety levels. In addition, according to participant surveys, treatment was associated with improved gastrointestinal function, better mood and enhanced cognitive performance.

Earlier, Elena Yakubova, medical director of the KhimRar Group, said that Russia’s Health Ministry had registered a domestic drug for treating anxiety disorders.

Mental disorders, including depression and anxiety, are becoming a global issue. According to the World Health Organization, around 970 million people worldwide suffer from mental disorders, with a steady increase in diagnoses among children and adolescents. Depression is also a leading cause of disability. WHO projections suggest that by 2030 it could become the leading cause of disease burden worldwide, surpassing cardiovascular and oncological conditions.

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