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NZ discovers link between high blood pressure and diabetes

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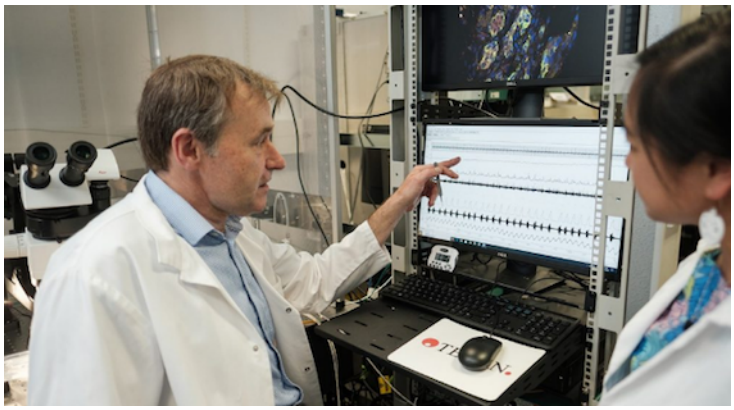
Solving the enigma of the relationship between high blood pressure and diabetes



Scientists at the universities of Auckland and Bristol are preparing to test a novel medication on patients with a potentially fatal combination of high blood sugar and high blood pressure, after promising findings in animal studies.

Around one in four people will experience high blood pressure at some time in their life, but despite it being so common, it is poorly controlled in half of those people. Meanwhile, New Zealand (NZ) has some of the worst statistics for diabetes in the world.

People with hypertension and/or diabetes are at high risk of life-threatening cardiovascular disease. Even when receiving medication a large number of patients will remain at high risk of cardiovascular disease. This is because most medications treat symptoms and not the real causes of high blood pressure and sugar.

The international team has demonstrated that a small protein called glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1), which was already known to regulate insulin, also controls blood pressure via the nervous system – a novel finding.

The next step will be to seek ethical approval for the trial of the naturally occurring compound on patients with diabetes and hypertension at Auckland Hospital.