

Researchers aim to diminish motion sickness with electrical current

By Marilyn Malara | Sept. 5, 2015 at 8:03 AM



A volunteer is pictured in the motion sickness simulator with an electrical current applied to his scalp. Photo courtesy of Imperial College London

LONDON, Sept. 5 (UPI) -- Researchers say a powerful cure for motion sickness may be available to the public within the next five to ten years. A team of scientists from Imperial College London say shooting a [mild electrical current](#) to the scalp can dampen the brain's responses to overstimulation from activities that cause motion sickness, like boating or riding roller coasters.

Dr. Qadeer Arshad, the author of the study [published in the journal Neurology](#), believes the treatment is safe and effective and says it should be available for purchase at drugstores in the near future. "It may be something like a tens machine that is used for back pain," he said. "We hope it might even integrate with a mobile phone, which would be able to deliver the small amount of electricity required via the headphone jack. In either case, you would temporarily attach small electrodes to your scalp before traveling -- on a cross channel ferry, for example."

Research was conducted [using volunteers](#) wearing electrodes on their scalps for ten minutes before being exposed to motion sickness-inducing conditions using a motorized rotating chair. According to scientists, the volunteers were less likely to become sick and recovered more quickly than when exposed to the conditions without the prior treatment.

"The problem with treatments for motion sickness is that the effective ones are usually tablets that also make people drowsy," says partnering researcher Michael Gresty. "That's all very well if you are on a short journey or a passenger, but what about if you work on a cruise ship and need to deal with motion sickness whilst continuing to work?"

"We are really excited about the potential of this new treatment to provide an effective measure to prevent motion sickness with no apparent side effects," he said. "The benefits that we saw are very close to the effects we see with the best travel sickness medications available."

Arshad reports the military has expressed interest in the new technique of treating motion sickness, as it is also said to promote concentration. He said the treatment can help people of different vocations such as "students and people who spend long periods playing computer games."

Short-term use of the electric current treatment is said to have zero side effects and is safe to use.



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