

26 May 2017 D. Tel

# Scientists find new clue to curing baldness

A CURE for baldness could be on the horizon after researchers discovered cells which could hold the clue to overcoming hair loss.

Scientists have found that immune system cells which control inflammation play a key role in hair growth.

The regulatory T-cells, known as "Tregs", normally ensure that other parts of the immune system do not overreact and run out of control.

When they go wrong it can result in allergies to harmless substances such

as peanut protein, or serious autoimmune diseases.

Now scientists have discovered another previously unknown function of Tregs - as hair triggers.

A series of experiments on mice showed how Tregs in the skin send out signals that stimulate hair follicle stem cells to regenerate and spark new hair growth. Dr Michael Rosenblum, the lead scientist, from the University of California at San Francisco, said: "Our hair follicles are constantly recycling:

when a hair falls out, the whole hair follicle has to grow back.

"This has been thought to be an entirely stem cell-dependent process, but it turns out Tregs are essential.

"If you knock out this one immune cell type, hair just doesn't grow."

The research, published in the journal *Cell*, could lead to new treatments for alopecia areata, an autoimmune disease that causes patchy hair loss from the scalp and eyebrows, or even male-pattern baldness.