# What Do Motion Sickness, Astronauts and Depression Have in Common?

May 20, 2010 By David Evans

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I've always suffered from motion sickness. Needless to say, childhood vacation caravans on small winding country roads were torture for me. The only thing I could do was hang my head out the window and hope to heck that we got wherever we were going as quickly as possible and that I wouldn't have to vomit along the way. If we'd had a drug back then that could have settled my queasy stomach I would have gladly given up all my Hot Wheels and baseball cards for it. Such a drug now exists, called scopalomine, only now, it's also being tested as a fast-acting antidepressant. How fast acting? Think days not weeks.

The National Institutes of Mental Health (NIHM) has a write up on the study and a very brief audio interview with the lead researcher, Muara Furey, MD. The drug isn't universally effective, but within just days of the first treatment, up to 32 percent of those who received the drug had improvements in depressive symptoms compared with only 6.5 percent of those who'd received a placebo. By the end of the study period, more than 60 percent had a total remission of their depression.

Currently, the drug has to be given by injection, but Furey reports that NASA is working on a nasal spray to treat motion sickness in astronauts. Full admission: the posting on the NIMH website is a couple of weeks old. I review dozens of blogs, news services, search engines and medical journals each week looking for stories. Occasionally, something that I passed over on first glance, intrigues me more the second time around. This is one of those stories.

So what do motion sickness, astronauts and depression have in common? Scopalomine.

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http://beta.docker.sanemag.com/blog/motion-sickness-astronauts-depression-common