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Ancient clay remedies are studied

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TEMPE, Ariz., Oct. 25 (UPI) -- U.S. scientists are investigating the efficacy of a French clay that was used for thousands of years to kill several kinds of disease-causing bacteria.

"There are very compelling reports of clay treating infections, but that's anecdotal evidence, not science," said Arizona State University-Tempe Associate Research Professor Lynda Williams.

Williams and Assistant Professor Shelley Haydel are coordinating three teams of U.S. researchers -- from ASU, the U.S. Geological Survey and the State University of New York-Buffalo -- under a two-year, \$440,000 grant from the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

Williams said people for thousands of years used clay to heal wounds, soothe indigestion, and kill intestinal worms. Although the practice has declined today, the recent increase in drug-resistant bacteria has prompted scientists to look at the ancient remedies to determine their efficacy.

"We're beginning to generate the first scientific evidence of why some minerals might kill bacterial organisms and others might not," said Williams.

The new research will be presented Monday in Denver during the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America.

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