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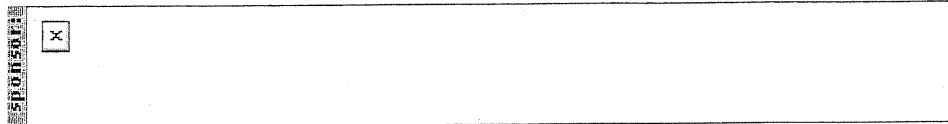
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UCLA Spearheading Early Stroke Therapy Trial

Plan Calls For Paramedics To Treat Patients With Drug Before Reaching ER

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LOS ANGELES -- The University of California, Los Angeles announced Friday it will spearhead a large-scale trial of an innovative stroke therapy that enlists paramedics to treat victims with a brain-protecting drug before reaching the emergency room.

The trial will examine if magnesium sulfate can shield the brain from damage when administered to stroke victims by paramedics within the first two hours of the onset of stroke. The drug dilates the blood vessels in the brain and prevents the buildup of damaging calcium in injured nerve cells.

The National Institutes of Health is giving UCLA \$16 million to carry out the four-year study, which will involve as many as 80 hospitals across Los Angeles County, the university said in a statement.

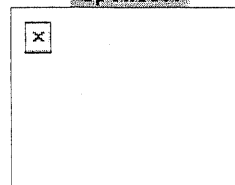
An earlier pilot study, concluded in 2002, showed that stroke victims who received the drug from paramedics tended to recover better than those who were administered the drug later in the hospital.

"Time is of the essence in treating acute stroke," said Dr. Jeffrey Saver, the study's principal investigator and a professor of neurology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA.

The trial will include 1,298 stroke victims, some of whom will receive the drug and others a placebo, allowing researchers to discern the drug's effect on outcome.

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