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£10m bid to 'grow' legs

By DANIEL THOMAS

PEOPLE who lose limbs were yesterday given hope of "growing" new ones.

Scientists believe that a £10million research grant will help them copy tissue regeneration seen in other species.

They will be studying the ability of the newt-like salamander, which can grow new arms and legs if one is severed or damaged.

Although the amphibians appear very different to humans, they share 83 per cent of the same DNA.

Plastic surgeon Gus McGrouther, of Manchester University, was so confident of his team's success he said: "It is all a question of money and resources and research and it will eventually happen."

Boffins believe the technology to grow back limbs could be available within a generation.

Every year 6,000 people undergo amputations in the UK — a third caused by smoking.

One victim, former solicitor Olivia Giles, lost all her limbs to meningitis.

The 40-year-old, from Edinburgh, said: "It's vital we push back the frontiers. It's utterly logical and extremely exciting."

The researchers are getting £5million from bosses and £5million from The Healing Foundation.

They will also study frog embryos to create medicines which stop post-op scarring.

Mr McGrouther added: "We really need regeneration and that is what we are moving towards. People want a whole body intact to avoid discrimination from their peers."

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