

New brain cells can hurt learning ability

For anyone fighting to save old memories, a fresh crop of brain cells may be the last thing they need. Research published today in *Science* suggests that newly formed neurons in the hippocampus — an area of the brain involved in memory formation — could dislodge previously learned information. The work may provide clues as to why childhood memories are so difficult to recall.

“The finding was very surprising to us initially. Most people think new neurons mean better memory,” says Sheena Josselyn, a neuroscientist who led the study together with her husband Paul Frankland at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada.

Humans, mice and several other mammals grow new neurons in the hippocampus throughout their lives — rapidly at first, but more and more slowly with age. Researchers have previously shown that boosting neural proliferation before learning can enhance memory formation in adult mice. But the latest study shows that after information is learned, neuron growth can degrade those memories.

Read the full, original story: [New brain cells erase old memories](#)