Bats rarely get viruses or cancer, and live extraordinarily long lives. Can that help guide human care?

Bats are infected with viruses that kill humans but don't usually get sick. They rarely get cancer. They are the only mammal that can truly fly and have extraordinarily long lifespans—some the human equivalent of more than 200 years, taking body size into account.

Bats are "not that different from a human, but the things they can do we can only dream of," said Linfa Wang, professor in the emerging diseases program at Duke-NUS Medical School in Singapore, who has studied bats for nearly three decades.

Paratus Sciences Corp. is putting $100 million into researching bats to target new drugs that could combat viruses as well as, potentially, cancer, diabetes, aging and other conditions.

…

Working in labs in New York and Singapore, the new company has identified some promising drug targets to address inflammation—which plays a role in many diseases—and aims to have its first product in five years, said Phil Ferro, president and head of global operations. "What we're doing is using the extreme physiology of mammals to guide us to more effective and efficient drug discovery," he said.

This is an excerpt. Read the full article here