

## WOUND HEALING IN HUMANS

It was widely believed that wound healing in humans takes significantly longer than in other mammals, but there was no solid scientific evidence to support this idea. Now, there is finally a dedicated and well-documented study on the subject. The work by Matsumoto-Oda et al.<sup>1</sup> shows that human wound healing is significantly slower, more than twice as slow, than in other mammals, including primates like baboons, vervet monkeys, and even one of our closest relatives, the chimpanzees. This suggests that slower healing may be a relatively recent and unique trait in human evolution.

A commentary from the Smithsonian<sup>2</sup> highlights a possible explanation: humans have fewer hair follicles, which in other mammals contain stem cells that help regenerate skin. In exchange, humans evolved more sweat glands, which improve thermoregulation but may compromise skin repair. This appears to be another evolutionary trade-off in the story of *Homo sapiens*.

On this topic, a BBC documentary narrated by David Attenborough, part of the *Dynasties* series, follows the power struggle within a chimpanzee troop over the course of more than a year. In one striking episode, the alpha male is found severely injured, apparently left for dead, after a nighttime attack by rival males. His wounds are deep and dramatic, and the expectation is that he will die at any moment. And yet, he manages to heal and, in an incredibly short time, returns to the group and reclaims his position as alpha.

1. <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rspb.2025.0233>
2. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/human-evolution-traded-fur-for-sweat-glands-and-now-our-wounds-take-longer-to-heal-than-those-of-other-mammals-180986533/>