**Vitamin E Could Halt Prostate and Lung Cancer**

The form of vitamin E found in many plant seeds—but not in most manufactured nutritional supplements—might halt the growth of prostate and lung cancer cells, according to a recent Purdue University study.

A team led by Qing Jiang has found that gamma-tocopherol, which occurs naturally in walnuts, pecans, sesame seeds, and in corn and sesame oils, inhibits the proliferation of lab-cultured human prostate and lung cancer cells. The vitamin's presence interrupts the synthesis of certain fatty molecules called sphingolipids, important components of cell membranes. However, the gamma-tocopherol leaves healthy human prostate cells unaffected, which could give it value as an anticancer agent.

"This is the first time gamma-tocopherol has been shown to induce death in lab-grown human cancer cells while leaving healthy cells alone," said Jiang, who is an assistant professor of foods and nutrition in the College of Consumer and Family Sciences. "This could be wonderful news for cancer patients if the effect can be reproduced in animal models. But because most nutritional supplements contain only alpha-tocopherol, a different form of vitamin E that alone does not have these anticancer properties, it may be better to supplement the diet with mixed forms of vitamin E. The study shows that the anticancer effect is enhanced when mixed forms are used."

**Chocolate Could Help Persistent Coughs**

According to new research, theobromine, a derivative found in cocoa, is nearly a third more effective in stopping persistent coughs when compared with codeine, currently considered the best cough medicine.

Professor Peter Barnes, from Imperial College London (ICL) and Royal Brompton Hospital (RBH), comments, "Coughing is a medical condition which affects most people at some point in their lives, and yet no effective treatment exists. While persistent coughing is not necessarily harmful it can have a major impact on quality of life, and this discovery could be a huge step forward in treating this problem."

The researchers from ICL, RBH, St. Bartholomew's Hospital and Chinois Co. Ltd, Budapest, gave 10 healthy volunteers theobromine, a placebo or codeine at different times in a randomized double blind trial.

Theobromine works by suppressing vagus nerve activity, which is responsible for causing coughing. The team also discovered that unlike standard cough treatments, theobromine caused no adverse effects on either the cardiovascular or central nervous systems.

Professor Maria Belvisi, from ICL and RBH, said, "Not only did theobromine prove more effective than codeine; at the doses used it was found to have none of the side effects. Normally the effectiveness of any treatment is limited by the dosage you can give someone. With theobromine having no demonstrated side effects in this study it may be possible to give far bigger doses, further increasing its effectiveness.

"At the same time, theobromine may not have any of the side effects such as drowsiness. This means there will be no restrictions on when it can be taken. For example, people using heavy machinery or who are driving should not take codeine, but they could take theobromine."

**Palmer Research Center Conducting Several Clinical Trials on Back Pain**

The Palmer Center for Chiropractic Research is currently studying back pain through several groundbreaking clinical trials at its research clinic. About 500 people from throughout the Quad-City region who suffer from back pain are being recruited to participate in two separate clinical trials, expected to last up to 18 months. Both studies are funded through federal grants totaling $2.4 million.

One study, "Elderly Back Pain: Comparing Chiropractic to Medical Care," which is funded by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, compares chiropractic to standard medical care for people over the age of 55 who suffer from chronic low-back pain.

The second study, "Predicting Patient Response to Spinal Manipulation," focuses on identifying characteristics of low-back pain patients who respond to chiropractic adjustments, examining pre- and post-treatment biomechanical and physiological changes, and analyzing the external forces, or loads, applied to patients undergoing chiropractic care for low-back pain. This study is one of several projects in a cooperative agreement funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health.
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