

In this issue:

-  *Happiness breeds healthy hearts, cuts cardiac risk*
-  *Green tea may fight eye diseases*
-  *Multivitamins may help weight loss in obese women*
-  *Omega-3, vitamins, minerals may reduce aggressive behaviour*
-  *Omega-3 may boost lung function during sport*
-  *Cocoa compounds may ease exercise-related heart function*
-  *Magnesium may decrease colon cancer risk*
-  *High calcium intakes may improve male survival*
-  *Gel innovation promises weight management pill*
-  *Supplements may hurt prostate treatment*

Welcome to Natural Health Review Issue 25.

Did you know that happiness and cocoa are good for heart health? Well, amongst this month's selection we have 2 studies suggesting just that. Also of interest is the development of a weight loss pill that swells in the stomach to create a sense of fullness. Finally though, a note of caution. Three well known dietary supplements taken by people with prostate cancer might actually have detrimental effects on radiotherapy treatment.

I hope you enjoy the studies highlighted this month, and look forward to receiving your feedback.

Kind Regards,

Dr Shaun Holt

shaun@naturalhealthreview.org

Happiness breeds healthy hearts, cuts cardiac risk

The facts:

- Over 1700 Canadians were followed for 10 years to see whether a positive mood was good for heart health.
- People with a positive outlook on life were found to have a 22% lower risk of heart disease events than those with a negative outlook, and depressed people had increased risk.
- Improving levels of happiness and reducing levels of depression may therefore be useful strategies for improving heart health.

Dr Shaun Holt:

We know that the mind has a large effect on the body and health, and this study has demonstrated that simply being a happier person results in a substantial reduction in the chances of getting heart disease. The researchers do not know why this occurs, and have suggested various mechanisms, but this study, which followed nearly 2,000 people for 10 years, is surprising for the size of the reductions in heart disease that were observed. Amazingly, being happy can be as beneficial as some potent medications!

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/eurheartj/ehp603>



naturalhealthreview.org

Your online resource featuring significant research summaries on natural health therapies related to a wide variety of health conditions.

www.naturalhealthreview.org

Green tea may fight eye diseases

The facts:

- Antioxidant catechins extracted from green tea were fed to rats to assess their distribution to various eye tissues.
- Byproducts of catechins were found in different concentrations throughout the eye, with the highest levels found in the retina and aqueous humour.
- Drinking green tea is potentially beneficial in people with glaucoma and other eye diseases.



Dr Shaun Holt:

This fascinating animal research from China has found yet another potential health benefit from drinking green tea – a reduction in glaucoma and other eye diseases. The antioxidant catechins were found to accumulate in the retina and aqueous humour parts of the eye, leading to a reduction in harmful oxidative stress in the eye which lasted for almost 24 hours. The researchers behind the study concluded that “... our results indicate that green tea consumption could benefit the eye against oxidative stress”. Catechins are also thought to reduce the size of the fatty plaques in artery walls which are responsible for many forms of heart disease.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1021/jf9032602>

Multivitamins may help weight loss in obese women

The facts:

- The effects of multivitamin and mineral supplements on bodyweight and blood fats were examined in 96 obese Chinese women.
- The women were divided into 3 groups and took a multivitamin/mineral supplement, calcium or identical placebo daily for 26 weeks.
- Supplementation with multivitamins and minerals reduced bodyweight, fat mass and harmful blood fats in obese women; calcium on its own improved blood fats only.

Dr Shaun Holt:

Obesity rates have doubled in less than 30 years, but could a simple multivitamin supplement be the answer. This medium-sized study from China strongly suggests so. The researchers found that the study participants who took the multivitamin and mineral supplement lost an average of 3.6kg of bodyweight during the 6-month study, compared to just a 0.2kg loss on average for those who took the placebo. As would be expected with such a degree of weight loss, significant reductions also occurred with respect to body mass index (BMI) and waist circumference.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1038/ijo.2010.14>

Omega-3, vitamins, minerals may reduce aggressive behaviour

The facts:

- The effects of food supplements on aggression, rule-breaking, and psychopathology were evaluated in 221 young Dutch prisoners.
- The prisoners received nutritional supplements containing vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids or placebos, for up to 3 months.
- Incidents of aggressive and rule-breaking behaviour reported by prison staff were reduced by 34% although no significant improvements were reported by the prisoners themselves.

Dr Shaun Holt:

We know that omega-3 and other supplements can help with a number of psychological and behavioural problems such as depression and possibly ADHD. But could they be of benefit in helping the behaviour of some of society's most difficult people – those who are in prison? In this new study from The Netherlands, nutritional supplements containing vitamins, minerals, omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids led to a 34 per cent reduction in violent incidents, in a randomized, double-blind, placebo controlled trial with over 200 young adult offenders. This compares to a 14 per cent increase in the number of incidents in participants who were allocated the placebo. The researchers stated that “... the prospect of influencing aggression and rule-breaking behavior with nutrients in moderate doses is important enough to warrant further research”.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/ab.20335>



To subscribe or view all Natural Health Review issues go to www.naturalhealthreview.org

To unsubscribe email office@naturalhealthreview.org with unsubscribe in the subject line.

Omega-3 may boost lung function during sport

The facts:

- The effects of omega-3 supplementation on lung function were assessed in 40 young Iranian wrestlers.
- Subjects consumed omega-3 1000 mg/day or placebo for 12 weeks and undertook strenuous wrestling training 3 times a week, or no exercise training.
- Results indicated that training and consuming omega-3 over a 12-week period significantly improved lung function during intensive exercise.

Dr Shaun Holt:

My running seems to have improved since I've been taking an omega-3 supplement and this small study may be able to explain this. Amateur wrestlers took either 1000mg of omega-3 or placebo and those who were allocated omega-3 had improvements in lung function after taking the supplement for 12 weeks. Although it was a small study, the magnitude of the improvements (up to 50%) mean that bigger and better studies should be undertaken urgently. Maybe I should take up wrestling!

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2008.12.634>



Independent commentary by

Dr Shaun Holt,
BPharm (hons),
MBChB (hons)

Cocoa compounds may ease exercise-related heart function

The facts:

- 21 overweight or obese people drank cocoa containing either high-dose flavanols or low-dose flavanols on 2 different occasions to see if the flavanols had any effect on their blood pressure response to exercise.
- The usual increases in blood pressure seen during exercise were reduced after drinking the high-dose flavanol cocoa.
- High doses of cocoa flavanols may therefore allow for safer exercise in people at high risk for heart problems, such as the obese.



Dr Shaun Holt:

This small Australian study found that just a single serving of a cocoa drink containing high levels of flavanols resulted in the exercise-induced rise in diastolic blood pressure in overweight individuals that was 68 per cent lower than in those who did not have this drink. These results add more weight to the growing body of research showing the cardiovascular benefits of cocoa which has high flavanol content. The findings prompted the researchers to conclude that these improvements “... add to growing evidence that high flavanol cocoa consumption may benefit individuals with cardiovascular risk factors”.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0007114509993382>

Magnesium may decrease colon cancer risk

The facts:

- The effects of dietary magnesium intake on colorectal cancer risk were evaluated in nearly 90,000 Japanese men and women who were followed for 5 years.
- High intake of dietary magnesium (≥ 327 mg/day) cut the risk of colorectal cancer in men by 35% and colon cancer by 52%, but no effects were seen in women.
- A diet high in magnesium (green leafy vegetables, meats, starches, grains and nuts, and milk) may decrease the risk of colorectal cancer in men.

Dr Shaun Holt:

Magnesium is an essential cofactor for DNA synthesis and repair and so it would make sense that lower dietary intake could lead to an increase chance of developing cancer and, conversely, that higher intake should reduce the chances of getting cancer. This was confirmed in this huge Japanese study which found that men with the highest average intakes of magnesium had a 52 per cent lower risk of colon cancer when compared to men who consumed the lowest average intakes. This is an observational finding and needs to be confirmed with randomized controlled trials, but the implications are staggering given that colorectal cancer accounts for nine per cent of new cancer cases every year worldwide.



<http://jn.nutrition.org/cgi/content/abstract/jn.109.117747v1>

Disclaimer: Natural Health Review features summarised interpretations of published studies and reflects the opinions of the writer rather than those of the research groups or scientific journals. Readers should consult a health professional before using any Natural Health products. Although Natural Health Review welcomes feedback, we cannot provide opinions or guidance on individual cases.

Privacy Policy: Research Review will record your details on a secure database and will not release it to anyone without prior approval. You have the right to inspect, update or delete your details at any time.

High calcium intakes may improve male survival

The facts:

- The effects of dietary calcium and magnesium on survival were assessed in 23,366 Swedish men aged 45–79 years.
- High dietary calcium reduced the risk of death from any cause (including heart disease and cancer) by 25% but no effects were seen with magnesium.
- High dietary intake of calcium may reduce the risk of dying from heart disease and cancer.

Dr Shaun Holt:

This is another observational study, and the usual disclaimers apply. The study, published in the prestigious American Journal of Epidemiology found that an intake of calcium above the recommended daily levels may reduce the risk of dying from heart disease and cancer by 25 per cent. The recommended daily intake of calcium for people between 19 and 50 years of age is 1,000mg for both men and women, according to the US National Institutes of Health (NIH), but the largest reductions were observed in people who took almost double this amount. Calcium is known to reduce blood pressure and this may account for at least part of the observation.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwp467>

Research Review acknowledges the kind support of



PHARMACY GUILD OF NEW ZEALAND (INC)

Gel innovation promises weight management pill

The facts:

- This experimental study showed that hydrogels (gels based on a cellulose matrix) swell in various solutions mimicking the stomach and intestines.
- After swelling in the stomach the hydrogel is excreted in the faeces.
- Nontoxic hydrogels might be useful for people on low calorie diets, because they swell to give a sense of fullness.



Dr Shaun Holt:

With over half of people in developed nations being overweight, we need more and better treatment options, as what we're doing now is clearly not working for many people. And sometimes the simplest solutions are the best. This novel pill simply swells in the stomach and makes you feel full and, given that it is made from cellulose, it is highly unlikely to have any side effects. As well as a pill, the technology could easily be converted into other formats, such as a drink or a porridge-like meal.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/app.30956>

Supplements may hurt prostate treatment

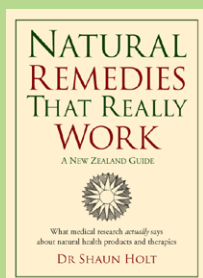
The facts:

- This study investigated whether 3 well known dietary supplements taken by people with prostate cancer (Trinovin, Provelex, and Prostate Rx) might affect radiotherapy treatment.
- Radiosensitivity of malignant prostate cells was not affected by any of the supplements, but the radiosensitivity of normal prostate cells increased.
- The use of prostate-specific dietary supplements should be discouraged during radiotherapy because they preferentially radiosensitise normal prostate cells.

Dr Shaun Holt:

The aim of the Natural Health Research Review is to present positive research, showing which natural remedies are proven to improve health, or at least look to be interesting potentially useful in the future. However, every now and then I like to provide a word of caution, such as this study which looked at three widely used commercial prostate-specific dietary supplements taken by many prostate cancer patients to improve or increase sexual potency or alleviate symptoms associated with poor prostate health. Two of the supplements inhibited the growth rate of normal prostate cells and the third also increased the cellular sensitivity to radiation of some normal cell lines by inhibiting DNA repair. These findings prompted the study senior author Brian Marples to conclude that what some patients believe is helping them may actually be harming them and that "... it is very important for all patients to discuss any type of supplement they may be taking with their physician and especially important for prostate cancer patients receiving radiation therapy".

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijrobp.2009.09.048>



NATURAL REMEDIES THAT REALLY WORK

BY DR SHAUN HOLT

Features high-quality clinical research results on natural remedies published in top international medical journals – from antioxidants to yoga. Advises on the correct application and dosage of treatments and remedies.

Can be purchased from all good bookstores or online at www.newzealandnaturalremedies.co.nz