

Grape seed extract may help prevent skin cancer



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Chemicals found in grape seeds may help ward off skin cancer due to regular exposure to the sun, according to the results of an animal study reported Sunday in Chicago at the 223rd annual meeting of the American Chemical Society.

Researchers from the University of Alabama, Birmingham exposed hairless mice to ultraviolet-light. Some of the mice they fed a standard diet supplemented with grape seed proanthocyanidins, or GSPs, while control mice were fed a standard diet without this supplement.

Dietary supplementation with GSPs inhibited light-induced carcinogenesis, study chief Dr. Santosh K. Katiyar told the conference.

Mice supplemented with GSPs had up to 65 fewer tumors than control mice did. Moreover, the tumors seen in GSP-supplemented mice were up to 78 percent smaller than those seen in the control mice.

"It suggests that regular consumptions of GSPs as a dietary supplement may be beneficial for the prevention of skin cancers," Katiyar said in a written statement.

GSPs appear to inhibit suppression of the immune system caused by ultraviolet light. This is "an important characteristic of GSPs, which has not been reported by several other dietary botanical agents," Katiyar noted.

GSPs have antioxidant activity, and UV-induced oxidative stress has been linked to the induction of skin cancers.

Over exposure to sunlight accounts for more than one million new cases of melanoma and non-melanoma skin cancers each year in the United States. Effective preventive agents and strategies that can reduce or control the risk of UV-induced skin cancer is required to address this "pressing public health issue," Katiyar said.

Based on the current findings, studies of GSPs for the prevention of skin cancers in humans are warranted, the Birmingham team concludes.

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