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Nutrition, Vitamins & Supplements for Seniors

# **Asian Spice Turmeric May Prevent Rheumatoid Arthritis and Osteoporosis**

#### U. of Arizona researchers say it may fight other inflammatory disorders

October 30, 2006 - An ancient spice, long used in traditional Asian medicine, may hold promise for the prevention of both rheumatoid arthritis and osteoporosis, according to a recently completed study at The University of Arizona College of Medicine. It is encouraging news for millions of senior citizens concerned about both conditions. Turmeric, the spice that flavors and gives its yellow color to many curries and other foods, has been used for centuries by practitioners of Ayurvedic medicine to treat inflammatory disorders.

**Related Stories** 

#### **Broccoli and Curry May Save American Men from Prostate Cancer**

Jan. 15, 2006 – The most common cancer in American men – prostate cancer - may be prevented and possibly treated by something as easy as eating certain

Turmeric extract containing the ingredient curcumin is marketed widely in the Western world as a dietary supplement for the treatment and prevention of a variety of disorders, including arthritis.

At the UA College of Medicine, Janet L. Funk, MD, working with Barbara N. Timmermann, PhD, then-director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded Arizona Center for Phytomedicine Research at the UA, set out to determine whather (and how) turmeric works as an

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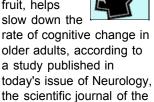
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vegetables, like broccoli and the curry spice turmeric, says a new study. Age is considered the most important risk factor for prostate cancer, since the average age of diagnosis is 70. But, evidence is mounting that a diet high in fats and red meat play a significant role in increasing this risk. American men, heavy consumers of red meat, have the highest rates of prostate cancer in the world. In the next 24 hours, prostate cancer will claim the lives of 83 American men, according to the National Prostate Cancer Coalition. Read more...

**Senior Citizens Can Slow Cognitive Decline by Eating More Vegetables** 

It is probably the vitamin E that does the trick

October 24. 2006 - Eating vegetables, not fruit, helps



American Academy of Neurology. Read more...

**Red Wine but Not** White Reduces Risk of Colon Cancer

Study says it is the resveratrol in red wine that provides protection

October 23, 2006-Drinking more than three glasses of red wine a week reduced the risk for colon cancer. according to research presented at the 71st Annual Scientific Meeting of the American College of Gastroenterology in Las

WHELHEL (allu HOW) LUHHELIC WOLKS AS ALL anti-arthritic.

They began by preparing their own extracts from the rhizome, or root, of the plant, providing themselves with wellcharacterized materials to test and to compare with commercially available products. (Dr. Timmermann since has joined the faculty of the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kan.)

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Dr. Funk and her colleagues then tested in animal models a whole extract of turmeric root, only the essential oils, and an oildepleted extract containing the three major curcuminoids found in the rhizome. Of the three extracts, the one containing the major curcuminoids was most similar in chemical composition to commercially available turmeric dietary supplements. It also was the most effective, completely inhibiting the onset of rheumatoid arthritis.

Dr. Funk, an endocrinologist in the UA Department of Medicine, says this study provides several noteworthy "firsts."

- Completed with the researchers' own prepared, well-defined extracts, the study represents the first documentation of the chemical composition of a curcumin-containing extract tested in a living organism, in vivo, for anti-arthritic efficacy.
- It also provides the first evidence of anti-arthritic efficacy of a complex turmeric extract that is analogous in composition to turmeric dietary supplements.

The significance, she explains, is that translating the results of trials such as these to clinical use depends on accurate information about the chemical content and biological activity of the botanical supplements available for use.

This work paves the way for the preclinical and clinical trials needed before turmeric supplements can be recommended for medicinal use in preventing or suppressing rheumatoid arthritis.

 This study also provides the first in vivo documentation of a mechanism of action - how curcumin-containing extracts protect against arthritis

Turmeric a Hot Research Topic

The medicinal properties of the turmeric have for millennia been known to the ancient Indians and have been expounded in the Ayurvedic texts. It is only in recent years that Western scientists have increasingly recognized the medicinal properties of turmeric.

According to a 2005 article in the Wall Street Journal titled, "Common Indian Spice Stirs Hope," research activity into curcumin, the active ingredient in turmeric, is exploding.

Two hundred and fifty-six curcumin papers were published in the past year according to a search of the U.S. National Library of Medicine.

Supplement sales have increased 35% from 2004, and the U.S. National Institutes of Health has four clinical trials underway to study curcumin treatment for pancreatic cancer, multiple myeloma, Alzheimer's, and colorectal cancer.

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Senior Citizen Health & Medicine

Eating Fish Reduces
Coronary Death Risk
by Stunning 36
Percent

Review in JAMA of past studies says death rate reduced 17%

October 18, 2006 – Researchers who



reviewed all the previous studies on the health impact of eating fish have concluded that avoiding modest fish consumption due to confusion regarding risks and benefits could result in thousands of excess coronary heart disease deaths annually. They found it reduces risk of coronary death by a stunning 36 percent and the rate of death by 17 percent. Read more...

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The researchers found that the curcuminoid extract inhibits a transcription factor called NF-KB from being activated in the joint. A transcription factor is a protein that controls when genes are switched on or off. Once the transcription factor NF-KB is activated, or turned on, it binds to genes and enhances production of inflammatory proteins, destructive to the joint. The finding that curcuminoid extract inhibits activation of NF-KB suggests that turmeric dietary supplements share the same mechanism of action as anti-arthritic pharmaceuticals under development that target NF-KB.

It also suggests that turmeric may have a use in other inflammatory disorders, such as asthma, multiple sclerosis and inflammatory bowel disease.

In addition to preventing joint inflammation, Dr. Funk's study shows that the curcuminoid extract blocked the pathway that affects bone resorption. Noting that bone loss associated with osteoporosis in women typically begins before the onset of menopause, she has begun work on another NIH-funded study to determine whether turmeric taken as a dietary supplement during perimenopause can prevent bone loss and osteoporosis.

Both of the studies are supported by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) and the Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS), both of the NIH.

An initial publication of the rheumatoid arthritis study results in the Journal of Natural Products, which was among the most-accessed articles from April-June 2006 in this prestigious American Chemical Society journal, is being followed by more detailed study results, which will appear in the November 2006 issue of the American College of Rheumatology flagship journal,

Arthritis and Rheumatism.

The article, "Efficacy and Mechanism of Action of Turmeric Supplements in the Treatment of Experimental Arthritis," is scheduled to appear in the online issue of Arthritis and Rheumatism Monday, Oct. 30, 2006.

#### Editor's Notes:

Contributors to the study include Janet L. Funk, MD; Jennifer B. Frye; Janice N. Oyarzo, MS; Nesrin Kuscuoglu, PhD; Jonathan Wilson; Gwen McCaffrey, PhD; Gregory Stafford; Guanjie Chen, MD; R. Clark Lantz, PhD; Shivanand D. Jolad, PhD; Aniko M. Soìlyom, PhD; Pawel R. Kiela, DVM, PhD; and Barbara N. Timmermann, PhD.

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