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## Consuming extra virgin olive oil helps to combat degenerative diseases such as cancer

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In the 1960s, Ancer Keys, a US expert on nutrition, studied the health benefits of the Mediterranean diet for the first time. Since then many studies on the benefits of olive oil have been conducted. According to several studies performed in Italy, Spain and Greece (the main olive-oil-producing countries), the incidence of diseases is lower in these countries than in Northern Europe.

The Environmental, Biochemical and Nutritional Analytical-Control Research Group, directed by Professors Alberto Fern'ndez Guti'rrez and Antonio Segura Carretero, used the most advanced analytical techniques for a precise study on the antioxidant properties of olive oil, characterized by its polyphenolic composition and its potential to combat degenerative diseases.

The study was completed with the collaboration of the Institut of Nutrition and Food Technology of the University of Granada and the Nutrition Team of the Hospital Virgen de las Nieves (Granada). Together with the Research Group, they have determined that consumption of olive oil rich in polyphenols (natural antioxidants) improves the lives of people suffering from oxidative stress, and is also highly beneficial for the prevention of cell aging and osteoporosis.

This research has stirred the interest of the Control Board of the Designation of Origin Sierra Segura. After analysing samples from 15 olive oil mills, researchers have demonstrated that olive oil is very rich in polyphenols. According to Professors Alberto Fern'ndez and Antonio Segura, as preventive substances, polyphenols help to combat any oxidative disease associated with the degenerative process.

The Environmental, Biochemical and Nutritional Analytical-Control Research Group of the University of Granada has carried out several related studies, such as the creation of a system aimed at guaranteeing the quality of bee honey and determining its geographical origin, or the polyphenolic characterization of food products such as honey, beer and propolis.

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