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Study: Extra-virgin olive oil offers hope of new breast cancer treatment

Submitted by Piyush Diwan on Fri, 12/19/2008 - 05:27.

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Recent study has revealed that extra-virgin olive oil contains plant chemicals that can help in curing breast cancer. Extra-virgin olive oil refers to the oil extracted by pressing olives without the use of heat or chemical treatments. This process helps in retaining plant chemicals that are otherwise lost in the refining process.


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This study revealed that two chemicals made by the plant and present in the oil blocked the protein involved in some breast cancers. Researchers first isolated the chemicals called lignans and secoiridoids then tested them against breast cancer cells in the lab.

Lead researcher, Javier Menéndez from the Catalan Institute of Oncology and Antonio Segura-Carretero from the University of Granada said, "Our findings reveal for the first time that all the major complex phenols present in extra-virgin olive oil drastically suppress overexpression of the cancer gene HER2 in human breast cancer cells."

Researchers concluded that although these findings provide new insights on the mechanisms by which good quality oil, polyphenol-rich extra-virgin olive oil, might contribute to a lowering of Her 2 breast cancers the results from the laboratory cannot be extrapolated to a human diet as the concentrations needed to produce an effect were much higher than could be obtained from food.



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