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Extra Virgin Olive Oil Fights Breast Cancer, Scientists Discover

Monday, February 16, 2009 by: Sherry Baker, Health Sciences Editor
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(NaturalNews) Researchers from the Catalanian Institute of Oncology (ICO) in Girona and the University of Granada in Spain have discovered that extra virgin olive oil appears to be a powerful weapon against breast cancer. In a study just published in the scientific journal *BMC Cancer*, the scientists report polyphenols -- powerful natural antioxidants found in abundance in extra virgin olive oil (the least processed form of the oil) -- have bioactivity against breast cancer cell lines.

In laboratory experiments, the researchers documented how phenolic compounds directly extracted from [extra virgin olive oil](#) were effective against both HER2-positive and HER2-negative breast [cancers](#) cells. That's particularly significant because HER2-positive [breast cancer](#) is a breast malignancy that tests positive for human epidermal growth factor receptor-2 (HER2) -- a protein which promotes the growth of [cancer](#) cells and makes HER2-positive breast cancers usually more aggressive than other kinds of breast cancer and less responsive to treatment. The research, conducted by Javier A. Menendez, coordinator of the Translational Research Unit of the ICO and doctors Alberto Fernandez Gutierrez and Antonio Segura Carretero, confirms that [polyphenols](#) (especially those known as secoiridoids and [lignans](#)) found in extra virgin [olive oil](#) not only inhibit the activity of cancer-promoting HER2 activity but also promotes the protein's degradation.

Humans have safely consumed olives and olive oil, and the secoiridoids and lignans these foodstuffs contain, for thousands of years. In a statement to the media, the researchers noted this fact, along with the results of their research, shows phytochemicals could be an excellent and safe basis for the design of new anti-HER2 cancer-fighting treatments.

In a review of olive oil research set for publication in the March edition of the journal *Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition* (2009 Mar;49(3):218-36), scientists from Deakin University in Victoria, [Australia](#), point out the health benefits of the so-called Mediterranean diet (such as a lower incidence of cardiovascular disease and atherosclerosis as well as several types of cancers) have been partially attributed to the regular consumption of virgin olive oil by Mediterranean populations.

The Australian researchers conclude this is likely due to the healthy physiological effects of virgin olive oil. For example,

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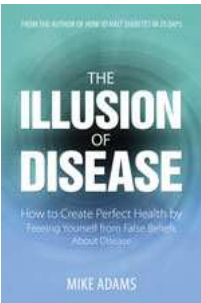
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About the author

Sherry Baker is a widely published writer whose work has appeared in Newsweek, Health, the Atlanta Journal and Constitution, Yoga Journal, Optometry, Atlanta, Arthritis Today, Natural Healing Newsletter, OMNI, UCLA's "Healthy Years" newsletter, Mount Sinai School of Medicine's "Focus on Health Aging" newsletter, the Cleveland Clinic's "Men's Health Advisor" newsletter and many others.

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