

Ancient Curry Spice Boosts Innate Immune Response to Fight Infection and Chronic Disease

By John Phillip, NaturalNews

The ancient curry spice known as turmeric and its bioactive component, curcumin have been revered in the world of Ayurvedic medicine for more than 2500 years. The flavorful, orange-yellow spice has been theorized to help prevent digestive cancers and improve measures of cognition and brain health as it is known to cross the blood-brain barrier. Past studies have shown that curcumin is a powerful antioxidant and anti-inflammatory, characteristics that are believed to provide human health benefits.

A research team from Oregon State University has released the result of a study in the *Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry* that demonstrates how curcumin exerts a measurable increase in levels of a protein that's known to be important in the innate immune system, helping to prevent infection in humans and other animals. Scientists found that curcumin activated the cathelicidin antimicrobial peptide, or CAMP, a critical component of our immune system that identifies previously unknown bacteria, allowing for rapid identification and removal of the invader.

Curcumin and vitamin D synergistically influence production of the disease-detecting CAMP peptide

Any natural compound that can influence or raise CAMP levels is of significance to human health, as it helps boost immunity and provides a barrier against a host of chronic conditions and pathogenic invaders. In recent years, vitamin D has been studied extensively and has been found to be a potent stimulator of CAMP activity. New research has found that curcumin and vitamin D work synergistically to fight infection and systemic inflammation as they both exhibit disease-fighting anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties.

The lead study author from the Linus Pauling Institute, Dr. Adrian Gombart commented about the study, *"This research points to a new avenue for regulating CAMP gene expression... it's possible that sustained consumption over time may be healthy and help protect against infection, especially in the stomach and intestinal tract."* Researchers compared the CAMP-stimulating activity of curcumin to omega-3 fatty acids and found that curcumin caused levels of CAMP to almost triple.

Vitamin D and curcumin have both been the subject of intense research over the past decade, because of the many potential therapeutic benefits in treating infection, cancer, psoriasis, and other diseases. New studies will be designed to fully examine the ability of these natural nutrients to enhance the genetic expression of the CAMP peptide to protect against a broad range of bacteria, including those that cause tuberculosis and protect against the development of sepsis. Experts suggest 2000 to 5000 IU of vitamin D and 500 mg of a standardized curcumin supplement daily to yield optimal protection from bacterial and viral pathogens and chronic disease.

Sources for this article include:

<http://oregonstate.edu>