

# Frankincense - Ancient Herbal Remedy Proven to be Effective Against Arthritis

*By Michelle Bosmier, NaturalNews*

Cardiff University scientists have discovered that an age old, traditional cure may actually be efficient against painful arthritis. The edible, aromatic resin known as frankincense has been used in the traditional medicines of Asia for centuries, mainly to aid digestion, heal wounds, fortify the endocrine system, destroy germs and help control skin conditions.

Frankincense is obtained from trees in the genus *Boswellia*, and when it is fit for consumption, its color ranges from light yellow to light orange, without any brown or black impurities. It has a chewy, sticky texture and a spicy, slight coniferous aroma. The incense also works as a good mosquito repellent, and due to its pleasant smell, frankincense extract is often added to exotic cosmetics, perfumes and essential oils.

Dr. Emma Blain, who has led the Cardiff research team alongside Professor Vic Duance from Cardiff University's School of Biosciences, and Dr. Ahmed Ali of the Compton Group revealed: "The South West of England and Wales has a long standing connection with the Somali community who have used extracts of frankincense as a traditional herbal remedy for arthritic conditions." They later added, "What our research has focused on is whether and how these extracts can help relieve the inflammation that causes the pain".

However, Dr. Blain and her team are not the first to investigate the medicinal properties of frankincense. In 2008, a group of Indian and American researchers had established that frankincense helped to significantly improve the health condition of a group of patients suffering from osteoarthritis, in as little as 7 days. Moreover, in 2009, the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center conducted yet another study on frankincense, revealing that the resin may help inhibit the development of cancerous cells in patients with bladder cancer.

*Boswellia frereana*, the frankincense variety used by the Cardiff research team, is a rare species that can suppress the production of key inflammatory cells, helping to prevent the breakdown of cartilage tissue in patients with arthritis. "The search for new ways of relieving the symptoms of inflammatory arthritis and osteoarthritis is a long and difficult one," said Dr. Blain. She added that frankincense can now be investigated in controlled environments, and its effects can be measured and compared to other common anti-inflammatory drugs that are regularly prescribed to treat arthritis.

Historically, frankincense has been sold primarily as an aromatic resin, to be used in perfumery and aromatherapy, and it is known to have been traded on the Arabian Peninsula, as well as in North Africa for over 5000 years.

Sources for this article include:

<http://arthritis-research.com/content/10/4/R85>