

Study Pushes Dangerous Drug as Urinary Infection Cure, But Cranberries Work Better

By S. L. Baker, *NaturalNews*

A just published study emphasizes that the super strong Big Pharma antibiotic combo trimethoprim-sulfamethoxazole (dubbed TMP-SMX, for short, and marketed as Bactrim, Bethaprim, Cotrim and Septra) appears to be more effective for repeated urinary tract infections (UTIs) than the time proven natural remedy of cranberries.

This research headed by Marielle A.J. Beerepoot, M.D., from the Academic Medical Center in Amsterdam might sound like great news for women who need help to beat UTIs. After all, these infections cause a host of unpleasant symptoms including burning on urination and pelvic pain. But when you take a closer look at what the research actually shows, the phrase "junk science" comes to mind. Cranberry extract fights urinary tract infections and, what's more, the drug that is being hyped as superior is actually loaded with dangers.

Background information in the journal article noted that UTIs are common in women, affecting nearly 50 percent at some point in their lives; up to 30 percent of women develop urinary tract infections that recur over and over.

Mainstream medical doctors frequently prescribe antibiotics as a preventive measure for UTIs for countless women who don't even have an infection. "However, this may lead to drug resistance not only of the causative microorganisms but also of the indigenous flora," the authors wrote.

They pointed out that studies of cranberries and cranberry products can prevent recurrent UTIs. In fact, *NaturalNews* has reported numerous times about the health benefits of cranberries and how they can specifically treat UTIs. For example, in previous studies, scientists at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) discovered cranberry juice creates what the researchers called an "energy barrier" that has the amazing power to prevent disease-causing microorganisms from starting an infection.

This barrier changes the thermodynamic properties of infection-causing germs in the urinary tract. Simply put, the bacteria are then unable to hook onto cells and cause illness (http://www.naturalnews.com/023802_j...).

The new study, just published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine*, aimed to directly compare cranberries with TMP-SMX to see which works best for UTIs. The research subjects were 221 premenopausal adult women who had reported at least three symptomatic UTIs in the previous year.

Half took either TMP-SMX (480 mg at night, plus one placebo capsule twice daily) or cranberry capsules (500 mg twice daily, plus one placebo tablet at night) for one year. The scientists checked the participants clinical status once a month and for three months after stopping the study medication by taking urine and feces samples. The research subjects also filled out a questionnaire and submitted urine samples when they experienced urinary tract infection symptoms.

At 12 months, the average number of clinical recurrences was 1.8 in the TMP-SMX group and 4.0 in the cranberry capsules group. Recurrence occurred, on average, after eight months in the drug group and after four months in the cranberry capsules group. So the conclusion, according to the media statement, was that the antibiotic used in this study appeared to be more effective at preventing UTIs than cranberry capsules.

But wait a minute. The cranberry capsules did work against UTIs, even at a fairly low dosage, although they didn't work as strongly as the drugs. And only capsules of cranberry were used. Isn't it possible cranberry juice, the whole fruit or a larger dosage would have increased effectiveness? Absolutely.

In fact, in an accompanying commentary, Bill J. Gurley, Ph.D., from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, Little Rock, pointed out that "supplements such as cranberry capsules may not demonstrate optimal efficacy due to issues with poor water solubility and the type of metabolism that occurs." For example, he explained, cranberry capsules might have a low level of bacteria-fighting chemicals in the dosage used that may have affected the study's results.

There was also a huge downside to taking TMP-SMX. Turns out, antibiotic resistant rates tripled in the disease-causing germs found in the women who took the drug.

Dr. Gurley noted that just one month into the study, antibiotic resistance for Escherichia coli was higher than 85 percent in the TMP-SMX group but less than 30 percent in the cranberry capsule group. "Such a marked reduction in antibiotic resistance certainly favors the therapeutic potential of cranberry as a natural UTI preventative," he wrote in the editorial.

Another important point to consider about the new study that supposedly concludes Big Pharma's prescription drug beats the natural alternative: while cranberries are side effect free, not so with the TMP-SMX antibiotic. A few problems you can experience from the drug are nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite, or headache muscle weakness, mental/mood changes, new lump/growth in the neck (goiter), low blood sugar, neck stiffness, seizures, liver damage, lung injury, and vaginal yeast infections.

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<http://jama.ama-assn.org/>

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