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Red Wine May Help Fight Prostate Cancer, Study Finds

By Jacob Gaffney

Compounds found in red wine may not only inhibit the growth of prostate cancer, but may also help destroy the cancer cells, according to a team of researchers in Madrid.

Based on lab tests with cultured prostate cancer cells, “It is very possible that the consumption of a moderate amount of wine could reduce the risk of developing prostate cancer,” said Dr. Ignacio Romero, lead scientist of the study published in British Medicine Journal *BJU International.*

Romero and his colleagues from Getafe University Medical Center isolated five chemical compounds found in red wine: quercetin, morin, rutin, gallic and tannic acid. (Other studies have indicated that resveratrol may have cancer-fighting effects.)

The five polyphenols were each added to a culture of human prostate cancer cells, and a control group of cancer cells was left to grow without manipulation.

During the 96-hour experiment, the researchers added more polyphenols to the cultures every 12 hours. After 24 hours, cell growth in the five cultures with added polyphenols dropped continually, at verying rates, up to the final reading. The compounds also increased the rate of cell death through apoptosis, a natural process in which extra cells self-destruct.

For example, the cells in the gallic acid group grew at one-fourth the speed of the control cells after 96 hours, and had nearly double the rate of apoptosis after 72 hours.

“The two strongest flavonoids were gallic and tannic acid, and the weakest, quercetin,” said Romero. “It is very possible that a combination of flavonoids could have a stronger beneficial effect.” He also suggested that the results point to the benefits of red wine as being cumulative.