



Choice test results of Glucosamine products overruled by TGA

AUSTRALIA'S drugs watchdog has declared an all-clear over labelling of products containing the arthritis treatment glucosamine, saying earlier tests appear to reveal a problem were based on flawed methodology.

In August, consumer magazine Choice claimed some brands of the complementary therapy—an amino sugar believed to help cushion joints—contained up to 28 per cent less glucosamine than claimed on the label, sparking investigation by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, which polices labelling and quality standards.

The TGA now says it undertook its own testing of over 20 glucosamine products, including the 10 examined by Choice, and the results "are inconsistent with those reported by Choice in most cases".

"This finding suggests there is a fundamental flaw in the methodology used by the laboratory that performed the testing on behalf of Choice," said a federal health department spokesman on behalf of the TGA.

"The TGA's test results showed that no regulatory action was required by the TGA."

The decision was welcomed by the Complementary Healthcare Council of Australia. Technical director Allan Crosthwaite said analysis of medicines needed to be carried out "by the appropriate regulatory body" and using validated methods.

A spokeswoman for Choice said its tests were carried out "using scientifically sound methods" at a highly reputable laboratory. We have provided details of our testing method to the TGA and expect to have useful discussions with them." [12 Nov 05, *The Weekend Australian*, Adam Cresswell, Health Editor]. Note: Choice has yet to provide details of their methods to the TGA.



Labelling of arthritis treatment, Glucosamine, was given the all-clear by the TGA, who said earlier tests conducted on behalf of consumer magazine 'Choice' appeared to be based on "flawed methodology".

CHC Xmas closure

THE Complementary Healthcare Council will be closed for Christmas from the close of business on Friday 23rd December 2005 until Tuesday 3rd January 2006. We wish



our members and our colleagues a very Happy Christmas, and a safe and prosperous New Year.

AHFA says herbal remedies under threat from 'ludicrous' law

THE sale of popular herbal remedies could be banned because of an "unworkable and impractical" European law, the Alliance for Health Freedom Australia stated 15 Oct 05.

Under a new directive, manufacturers will have to provide evidence that their products are safe before they are given a licence, and only products which have been on sale in the EU for 30 years will be automatically approved.

[Read More: http://www.ahf-au.org/herbal.remedies.threat.htm](http://www.ahf-au.org/herbal.remedies.threat.htm)

European food industry debates the future

SENIOR executives, regulatory managers, product developers and academics met 19-20 October 05, in Brussels, Belgium at the *Healthy Foods European Summit* to debate some of the tough issues facing food manufacturers.

Presentations and topics included obesity, kids nutrition, innovation, health claims, nutrient profiling, consumer communications, and biotechnology. Interestingly, when communicating health benefits to consumers was discussed, Euromonitor statistics confirmed that successful products are generally those that target 'wellness' rather than those making specific claims. [15 Nov 05]

[Read the review of the Summit here: http://www.healthyfoodssummit.com/](http://www.healthyfoodssummit.com/)



The truth about the latest Echinacea research

YET another study has come out purporting to expose the ineffectiveness of echinacea, the very popular botanical medicine for the common cold, stated the *Daily Health News*, on 31 October 05, who also decided to take a closer look at exactly what



Echinacea - another study.

researchers did and did not discover this time around.

After speaking with two top herbal experts Francis Brinker, ND, author of *Complex Herbs*, *Complete Medicines (Eclectic)*, and Mark Blumenthal, founder and executive director of the American Botanical Council, *Daily Health News* noted both herbal experts were in agreement that this was by no means the definitive trial on echinacea, though Blumenthal did point out that while he doesn't question the accuracy of this specific study, the results apply only to a particular type of echinacea used at a particular dosage in a particular population.

Both he and Dr. Brinker advised consumers to see the results for what they are in this narrow context, rather than leaping to sweeping, simplistic conclusions - as many mainstream media critics of natural medicine

have already done - that "echinacea doesn't work."

In the double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial, 437 student volunteers at the University of Virginia were given about one-third the dose of echinacea considered effective by US experts or a placebo.

Next they were deliberately exposed to a particular type of rhinovirus that causes colds, and sequestered in hotel rooms for two weeks. Researchers found that those who were given echinacea did not experience fewer colds, fewer symptoms or a reduction in the duration of symptoms, compared with those who were given a placebo.

Although the trial was accurate insofar as it went, the experts noted significant limitations, such as the type of Echinacea used; low dose being used, the frequency of administration, and the choice of participants in the trial. [18 Nov 05]

Note: The results of this federally funded study were published in the July 28, 2005, edition of *The New England Journal of Medicine*.

View the full article here: http://www.nowfoods.com/?action=itemdetail&item_id=74857

Tamiflu 'concerns'

EUROPEAN drug regulators remain adamant that there is as yet no clear causal relationship between Roche's anti-flu drug, Tamiflu, and the alleged suicidal deaths of two adolescents in Japan. However, concerns about potentially harmful psychiatric side effects linked to the use of Tamiflu continue to permeate global markets.

It is no surprise for Roche or drug regulators that psychiatric side effects, such as delirium, disorientation and other abnormal behaviour, could be linked to Tamiflu, as there were "already some reports at the time of [European] approval in 2002," a spokesman for the European Medicines Agency (EMA) said. [15Nov 05].

[Click here to read full article.](#)

Nutrient that alters gene activity in animals - implications for halting disease

INJECTING an amino acid, also available as a food supplement, into rats permanently changed their behaviour by altering expression of certain genes, US scientists have reported.

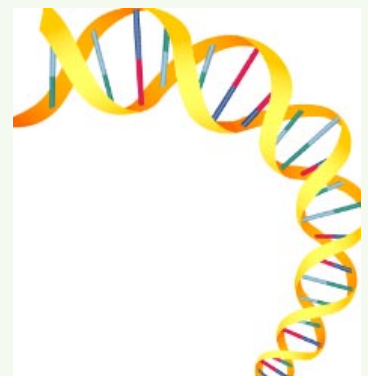
The findings, discussed in the Nov 05 issue of *New Scientist*, adds further weight to the theory that foods humans eat can have a permanent impact on behaviour and health, also known as nutrigenomics.

Further, emerging research suggests that supplements could be taken to halt the genetic effects that predispose people to certain diseases.

"A huge number of diseases are caused by changes to how our DNA is expressed, and this opens up new ways of thinking about how to prevent and treat them," commented Rob Waterland, a researcher on an earlier mouse study.

But he warned that substances like methionine and TSA are likely to demethylate lots of other genes too and more work needs to be done to allow scientists to better target the methylation. [17 Nov 05]

Full article: <http://nutrainingredients.com/news/ng.asp?id=63968-nutrigenomics-dna>





Canadian Study finds many heart patients use alternative medicines, but raise drug interaction risks by not telling their doctors

WHILE many heart patients use complementary and alternative medicines - their doctors often don't know about it.

"In the era of evidence-based medicine, we have more patients who are quite comfortable with alternative medicine rather than drugs proven to work," study author Dr. Beth Abramson, director of the Cardiac Prevention Center at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, said in a prepared statement. "Unfortunately, many patients believe that if something is natural, then it's safe," she added. "But many of these alternative medicines are not regulated, aren't necessarily safe, and many have not been proven effective." [17 Nov 05]

Full Article: <http://healthfinder.gov/news/newsstory.asp?docID=529129>



Canadian Study shows many heart patients are comfortable using alternative medicines - but could be raising drug interaction risks by not informing doctor.

China's growth

CHINA'S nutrition industry index, issued for the first time in mid-November, indicates their nutrition industry showing double-digit growth and revealing even greater potential.

The nutrition industry index is significant in its reference to government policy, institute research and enterprise strategy concerning public nutrition, said a report in the state media Xinhua.

Zhou Haichun, vice director with the Public Nutrition and Development Center (PNDC), added: "Now China's nutrition industry is promising and it will grow at a rate of 12 per cent to 15 per cent. By 2010, the gross products of China's nutrition industry will total 278 billion yuan (US\$34.3 bn)." [16 Nov 05]

Report says consumers sceptical of healthy food claims

FOOD marketers face a major challenge in convincing consumers of the credibility of their products, as the second report in a month highlights a lack of trust in the health benefits of functional foods amongst both European and North American consumers.

The latest report from ACNielsen indicates that in almost all categories of functional foods, the main reason why consumers did not buy them was because they do not believe in the health benefits. A total of 21,261 consumers in 38 markets took part in the marketing information provider's online survey between April 11 and May 10 2005. They were asked which of nine categories of functional foods they purchase on a regular basis. One-in-two Europeans claims to understand the nutritional information on food packaging, but on a country-by-country basis understanding varies significantly. The categories were: cholesterol reducing oils and margarines; fermented drinks containing 'good' bacteria; probiotic yoghurts; soy milk; milk with added supplements or vitamins; bread with added supplements or vitamins; whole grain, high fiber products; cereal with added folate; fruit juice with added supplements or vitamins; and iodine enhanced cooking salt.

According to Datamonitor, the US functional foods market was worth EUR 16.2 billion at retail in 2004, and the Western European market EUR 4 billion. [06 Dec 05]

View full article here: <http://nutraingredients.com/news/ng.asp?id=64365-acneilsen-functional-foods-health-taste>

New study finds Ginseng prevents colds, reduces symptoms

CANADIAN researchers have found that when 'regular' cold sufferers took a standardized extract of North American ginseng root, they had significantly less colds than a placebo group, and less severe symptoms. Only one in 10 of those given daily doses of the supplement suffered two or more colds during four months including winter, compared with almost a quarter of those taking placebos. [25 Oct 05]

Full article at: <http://nutraingredients.com/news/ng.asp?id=63440-ginseng-cold-flu>

No progress on Codex health claims debate

THE CODEX nutrition committee made little headway on draft health claims recommendations when they met in late November. Attended by 300 delegates from around 70 countries, much of the debate at this year's meeting centred on questions about how to assess the scientific basis of health claims, and included the definition and properties of dietary fibre. A Circular Letter with these questions will be sent to member countries and observers calling for comment on them. The committee also agreed to move health claims up the agenda for the 2006 meeting in Thailand to give them more time for discussion. [25 Nov 05]

View full article here: <http://nutraingredients.com/news/ng.asp?id=64153-codex-health-claims-fibre>



Garlic component fights meat carcinogens



Researchers test diallyl sulphide derived from garlic

US RESEARCHERS say a component of garlic that gives the herb its flavour may inhibit the effects of a suspected carcinogen produced by meat cooked at high temperatures. Cooking protein-rich foods like meats and eggs at high temperatures releases a chemical called PhIP, which is thought to be cancer-causing. Diallyl sulphide (DAS), a flavour component of garlic, has been shown to inhibit the effects of PhIP that, when biologically active, can cause DNA damage or transform substances in the body into carcinogens.

Ronald Thomas and a team of researchers at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee suspected that PhIP enhances the metabolism of the enzymes linked to carcinogenesis. They tested whether diallyl sulphide derived from garlic could counter this activity.

"We treated human breast epithelial cells with equal amounts of PhIP and DAS separately, and the two together, for periods ranging from three to 24 hours," said Thomas, presenting the study at the American Association for Cancer Research's Frontiers in Cancer Prevention Research meeting in Baltimore.

"PhIP induced expression of the cancer-causing enzyme at every stage, up to 40-fold, while DAS completely inhibited the PhIP enzyme from becoming carcinogenic."

The finding demonstrates for the first time that DAS triggers a gene alteration in PhIP that may play a significant role in preventing cancer, notably breast cancer, induced by PhIP in well-done meats. [07 Nov 05]

Full article at: <http://nutraingredients.com/news/ng.asp?id=63714-garlic-cancer-philp>

Delay to patent law change means "significant costs," says CHC's Tony Lewis

AN article in the online publication, *Pharma in Focus* reported:

In a delay which could cost OTC and complementary medicines makers hundreds of thousands of dollars and delay products coming to market, the Therapeutic Goods Amendment Bill (No 2) has been held over until next year.

A final Senate vote on the bill was expected in the parliamentary session that concluded last Friday but it was held back.

The bill's major practical effect is to eliminate the need for patent searches prior to listing of medicines on the register of therapeutic goods.

Sponsors of most listed medicines are currently paying thousands of dollars for patent searches so they can certify to the Therapeutic Goods Administration that new products they sponsor are not in breach of a patent.

The bill is a recognition that the patent certification provision arose from a misunderstanding of the US Australia Free Trade Agreement wording that affected complementary medicines and that such certification should be confined to products that have more stringent registration requirements.

"This is a real disappointment. It will have a negative impact on the industry. Every week that goes by people are incurring significant costs," Complementary Healthcare Council executive director Tony Lewis said.

Dr Lewis added that he knew of a number of companies that had held back listing applications in anticipation of the bill being law by the end of this year. "Now it could be February at the earliest before the change," he said.

The Therapeutic Goods Amendment Bill that introduces additional and higher sanctions to the Therapeutic Goods Act was also held over until 2006. [12 Dec 05]



Dr. Tony Lewis, Executive Director, CHC.

Cartilage extracts do relieve arthritis

As reported in *The Mercury* (Tasmania, 18 Nov 05): IT'S official: two dietary supplements that millions already swear by for aching joints finally have some real science behind them. Glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate, taken together, may help reduce moderate to severe knee pain caused by osteoarthritis, according to research presented at the American College of Rheumatology's annual meeting in San Diego, California. This was the first largescale clinical trial of the popular supplements to be funded by the US government rather than private industry.

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