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Cranberry juice consumption may protect against cardiovascular disease

Published on October 12, 2015 at 2:31 PM

Results from a new study presented at the *Cranberry Health Research Conference* preceding the annual *Berry Health Benefits Symposium 2015* in Madison, WI, revealed that cranberry juice consumption may play a role in protecting against cardiovascular disease. Presented by principal investigator, Ana Rodriguez-Mateos, PhD, from the Division of Cardiology, Pulmonology and Vascular Medicine at the University Duesseldorf, Germany, the research uncovered a potent, dose-dependent relationship between cranberry juice and improved vascular function. Because vascular dysfunction, including limitations in blood flow, is a central feature in the [development of atherosclerosis](#) - improving vascular function can have a powerful, beneficial effect on a person's cardiovascular health.

"Cranberry juice is a rich source of phytonutrients, including proanthocyanidins, anthocyanins and phenolic acids," explains Dr. Rodriguez-Mateos. "Due to this robust profile of polyphenols, our team sought to evaluate the immediate vascular impact of drinking one, 450 ml (or 16 ounces) glass of cranberry juice with a different range of concentrations of cranberry-polyphenols."

In a randomized, controlled crossover trial, researchers gave ten healthy male subjects, between the ages of 18-40 years, 450 ml (just under 2 cups) of sweetened cranberry juice made from concentrate. The cranberry concentrate was prepared with water to concentrations ranging from 0 to 117%. The amount of cranberry-polyphenols increased with the concentration. Non-invasive measurements of vascular function including flow-mediated vasodilation (FMD), blood pressure and arterial stiffness were performed at baseline and at one, two, four, six and eight hours post-consumption. Blood and urine samples were collected for 24 hours following consumption to detect changes in plasma and urinary cranberry-derived polyphenols. Across the board, all of the cranberry juices benefited FMD - including 25% cranberry juice, equivalent to the commonly consumed cranberry juice cocktail (25-27%). The highest concentration of cranberry-polyphenol juice also showed improvements in systolic blood pressure.

Defending the health of the circulatory system - and improving vascular function - not only reduces the chance of developing atherosclerosis, but plays an important role in kidney function, hormone delivery and waste filtration.

"Our results lay the groundwork to better understand the array of potential vascular and cardiovascular health benefits of cranberry polyphenols," notes Dr. Rodriguez-Mateos. "Significant improvements in vascular function from drinking two cups of cranberry juice suggest an important role for cranberries in a heart-healthy diet."

Source:

Pollock Communications
