Study Shows Hope for Curcumin in Helping Prevent the Spread of Breast Cancer

By Greg Arnold, DC, CSCS, abstracted from “Curcumin Suppresses the Paclitaxel-Induced Nuclear Factor- B Pathway in Breast Cancer Cells and Inhibits Lung Metastasis of Human Breast Cancer in Nude Mice” in the October 15, 2005 issue of Clinical Cancer Research

Link – http://www.nowfoods.com/HealthLibrary/HealthArticles/WeeklyNewsletter/M074664.htm

As the second biggest cancer killer of American women after lung cancer, breast cancer killed an estimated 40,580 women in 2004. While a number of treatment options are available for those afflicted with breast cancer, from chemotherapy to hormonal therapy to surgery, nutrition can provide a number of prevention benefits from increased intake of apples, broccoli, olive oil, soy, and kelp.

While all these nutrition options are aimed at breast cancer prevention, a new study has found a food that may be able to halt the spread of breast cancer: curcumin.

Curcumin is the natural yellow pigment found in turmeric, a spice used for centuries in the south and southeast tropical Asian countries. Of particular importance in curcumin is the presence of what has been called “curcuminoids” that give curcumin tremendous anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. And with both inflammation and oxidative cell damage involved in the onset of cancer, it seems plausible that curcumin could act in the prevention of cancer in some way.

In the study, researchers found that curcumin “significantly decreased” the spread of breast cancer to the lungs in mice by inhibiting the activity of a protein called nuclear factor-kappaB that is involved in the spread of breast cancer in the body. Curcumin also increased cell death (called “apoptosis”) in the breast tumor itself.

For the researchers, “Our results indicate that curcumin…has a therapeutic potential in preventing [the spread of breast cancer].”

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Reference:
2 “Overview of Options” posted on breastcancer.org www.breastcancer.org/tre_opts_idx.html
5 Menendez, J. A. "Oleic acid, the main monounsaturated fatty acid of olive oil, suppresses Her-2/neu (erbB-2) expression and synergistically enhances the growth inhibitory effects of trastuzumab (Herceptin) in breast cancer cells with Her-2/neu oncogene amplification." Ann Oncol 16(3): 359-71

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