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Sea buckthorn could have liver benefits, say scientists

By Lorraine Heller

23-May-2008 - **A new study on sea buckthorn has found that the extract may ward off liver disease, leading researchers to conclude that it could be incorporated into a nutraceutical food or supplement targeting the condition.**

The up-and-coming berries have already been linked to numerous health benefits for conditions such as cholesterol, heart disease, and inflammation.

A study published today in the Society of Chemical Industry's Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture has found that extracts from the leaf of [sea buckthorn](#) also have significant hepatoprotective activity, making it a possible candidate for protection against [liver](#) disease.

Scientists from India's Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences treated rats with three different doses of leaf extract, which, they reported, helped to protect against a liver damage agent.

Method

Sea buckthorn leaves were collected from the Western Himalayas. They were dried and an ethanol extraction process was used to obtain an extract.

Male albino rats were divided into six groups, with eight rats in each group.

The first group - the control - received a daily oral dose of normal saline for a period of five days. The second group received normal saline for four days, and on the fifth day was given a dose of carbon tetrachloride (CCl4), a liver damage agent, in order to induce hepatotoxicity.

The third group received daily doses of silymarin, which is used to treat liver disease, and was taken as a positive control for hepatoprotection.

Groups four, five and six received 50, 100 and 200mg of sea buckthorn leaf extract respectively for five days, followed by a single dose of CCl4 on the fifth day.

According to the researchers, pretreatment with leaf extract at a concentration of 100mg and 200mg "significantly" protected the animals from CCl4-induced liver injury.

"The results of the present study clearly indicate that leaf extract of sea buckthorn has significant hepatoprotective activity and can be developed as a nutraceutical or food supplement against liver diseases," concluded the researchers.

Previous studies

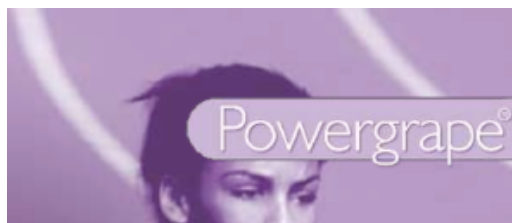
The researchers said that earlier investigations from their

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laboratory had also demonstrated that leaf extracts of sea buckthorn have significant antioxidant and immunomodulatory activity. The leaf extract was also found to provide protection against chromium-induced oxidative stress in rats.

In other studies on the plant, scientists from Finland recently reported that regular consumption of sea buckthorn berries reduced levels of a protein that is associated with inflammation, diabetes and heart disease.

The study, published in the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition* (doi: 10.1038/sj.ejcn.1602831), potentially added sea buckthorn berries to the list of antioxidant fruits, including pomegranate, guarana, mangosteen, noni berries, goji berries and blueberries, which are increasingly seen by food and beverage makers as up and coming ingredients.

Moreover, in 2006 scientists in India reported a new extraction method for sea buckthorn berries giving a juice rich in vitamin C, polyphenols and flavonoids.

The research, published in the *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture* (Vol. 86, pp. 2345-2353) reported using continuous high speed centrifugation (spinning) to separate the juice and the solid sludge the resulting juice retains more than 40 per cent of polyphenols, 50 per cent of flavonoids and 70 per cent of vitamin C present in the pulp of the red berries.

Indigenous to the mountainous regions of China and Russia, sea buckthorn has been shown to be rich in vitamin C, vitamin E, flavonoids and essential fatty acids.

Source: *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture* (2008) DOI: 10.1002/jsfa

'Hepatoprotective effects of sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides* L.) against carbon tetrachloride induced liver injury in rats'

Authors: Suryakumar Geetha, Purushothaman Jayamurthy, Karan Pal, Shweta Pandey, Ratan Kumar and RC Sawhney, *Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences*

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