

Researchers Demonstrate Anti-cancer effect of Mushrooms

Researchers have identified phytochemicals in mushrooms that block the enzyme aromatase from producing oestrogen. Controlling aromatase activity can help reduce oestrogen levels, thereby helping to overcome hormone-dependent breast cancer. In addition, the researchers found that mushrooms can inhibit cancer cell activity and slow the growth of tumours. Data from two early-stage studies using mushrooms to prevent breast cancer recurrence and in the treatment of lung cancer was presented at the 2011 Annual Meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology

Data suggests that around one in five breast cancer survivors will experience a recurrence of his or her cancer within 10 years of treatment of the initial cancer diagnosis. With more than 80% of those diagnosed in women after the menopause being hormone-dependent, preventative treatments are needed to reduce that risk. The natural aromatase-inhibiting qualities of mushrooms noted in pre-clinical studies have the potential to offer a dietary intervention. The study used an extract from white button mushrooms but as yet no dose has been identified that would meet all required criteria and the researchers suggest that future studies should focus on more highly concentrated preparations of mushroom extract.

Another study, also carried out at the City of Hope's Department of Medical Oncology & Therapeutics Research, investigated an extract derived from Shiitake Mycelium in mushrooms, with a view to testing its effects on lung cancer. Researchers report that the clinical trial is still ongoing but interim data are promising with indications the extract may be stimulating an immune response against the tumour.

Naturopathic Nutrition Association June 2011