

Research News

- for macular only

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STUDIES SHOW PYCNOGENOL® USEFUL IN TREATING DIABETES

New York - December, 2002— In a recent clinical study, the powerful natural antioxidant, Pycnogenol® helped 30 diabetics ward off one of the most debilitating affects of the disease, diabetic retinopathy involving bleedings in the eye, which can lead to blindness. The study, which was published in *Phytotherapy Research*, concluded that Pycnogenol® helped slow progression of diabetic retinopathy (blindness) by sealing the leaky capillaries that cause the condition.

During the two-month a clinical study, participants showed no deterioration of retinal function and some showed a significant recovery of visual acuity in comparison to the progressively worsened condition of the ten patient placebo-treated group.

Diabetic retinopathy is the leading form of blindness in people under the age of 60 in the US and affects more than 5.3 million Americans. Some diabetics are looking to natural sources to keep their eyes healthy. Pycnogenol® has shown a positive affect in five clinical studies, including more than 1,000 diabetics, in strengthening the tiny capillaries in the eye. Researchers conducted the studies because Pycnogenol® has been shown to strengthen the circulatory system in dozens of studies over the last two decades.

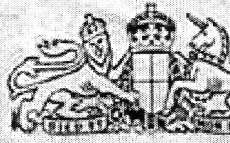
According to Victor Ferrari, Chief Operating Officer of Horphag Research, "Based on this scientific evidence and the results from four additional clinical studies, a new Pycnogenol® product, Picno 30™, was developed by Novartis specifically for the treatment and prevention of diabetic retinopathy and is available in Europe."

In addition to the extensive research in diabetic retinopathy, Pycnogenol® has been studied in connection with other complications associated with diabetes. Diabetes increases the production of free radicals, which damage the body by increasing the risk of heart attack, nerve damage, cataracts, blindness and stroke.

Antioxidants are known for their combative properties against free radicals and according to the recent book *Pycnogenol® For Superior Health* by Richard A. Passwater, PhD., "Diabetics need more antioxidant protection than healthy persons. Pycnogenol is the most powerful antioxidant nutrient known at this time."

While Pycnogenol® helps guard against health risks linked to diabetes, the super antioxidant also increases the body's defenses, like Vitamin C and E, to maintain general health. Most importantly, Pycnogenol® has been extensively researched for its safety and can be taken continuously without side effects.

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Breakthrough on diabetic blindness

A PINE tree grown in South-West France could be the key to preventing one of the most common forms of blindness.

Author Sue Townsend is perhaps the best-known sufferer of diabetic retinopathy, a complication of diabetes that causes bleeding into the retina and leads to up to 8,000 people a year losing their sight.

The condition develops when diabetics allow their blood sugar levels to creep too high, and it often goes undetected until damage to the eye has started.

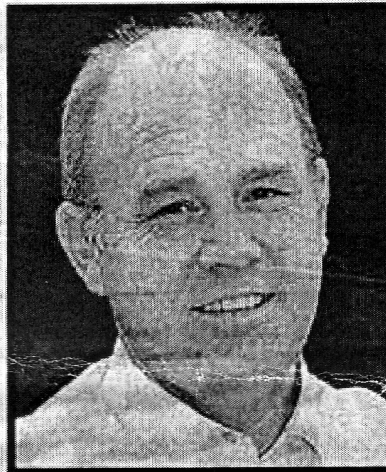
New research shows that Pycnogenol, an extract of French maritime pine bark grown in Gascony, can slow or even halt the bleeding that leads to the loss of sight. Among people who are insulin dependent, 90 per cent will develop diabetic retinopathy after a lifetime with diabetes. Among those with late-onset or type-two diabetes, 60 per cent are affected after 20 years.

'These sorts of levels are very disturbing when you think how devastating the loss of sight can be,' says Dr Frank Schonlau, of the University of Munster, who has studied the effects of diabetic retinopathy.

'You have to remember that once the damage is done to the back of the retina, which receives the messages that help us see, it cannot be reversed. So we need to find ways of preventing the damage in the first place and treatments that can slow or stop it.'

In a recent trial published in the journal *Phytotherapy Research*, more than half the patients taking Pycnogenol capsules had their retinopathy slowed or even halted by the supplement. Retinopathy starts with the fragile capillaries in the retina breaking down because of high glucose levels in the body.

Scientists have found that the pine bark extract is a powerful anti-oxidant which helps to seal and strengthen the fragile and leaky capillaries in the retina. It binds tightly to collagen and elastin in the blood cell walls, preventing them



New hope: Diabetic Jeremy Jennings

from bursting. Although the initial trials with Pycnogenol have been fairly small, there are now plans for larger trials to support the initial findings.

Jeremy Jennings, a 47-year-old car salesman from the Isle of Wight, has been taking Pycnogenol for six months since being diagnosed with diabetic retinopathy.

'It seems to have helped stabilise my vision since I've started taking it,' he says. 'My daughter, who is 21, was very worried when I got the diagnosis and found information about it on the internet. Then I bought some from the local health shop.'

Mr Jennings, who has been an insulin-dependent diabetic for 30 years, admits that his glucose levels have fluctuated over the years.

'I was quite surprised when I was diagnosed by the consultant, as I had no inkling that anything was wrong with my sight. He detected small amounts of bleeding on the retina which I'm hoping will not get any worse. I'm keeping my fingers crossed.'

MARTYN HALLE

There are 5 Papers in the literature showing benefit.

Currently Novartis in Europe are undertaken trails and are hoping to launch this shortly for diabetics. The results of the research are not though yet know. Hence we cannot assume its benefits but the fact Novartis are talking about this product implies there is some interesting results to come out soon.

Available from Health and Food stores.

Recommended dose yet to be worked out but 50 to 100mg is the usual range.

Eg. GNC who are also on the WEB at GNC.co.UK supplies

Bio-Pycnogenol 40mg two tablets a day Cost £22.36 with discount card.

Or Holland & Barrett also on the web at www.hollandandbarrett.com

Have 30 or 60mg at £17.49.

