



NATURE CURES...HEALTH NEWS

ISSUE 2

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A diet rich in polyphenols and poly-unsaturated fatty acids could delay the onset of Alzheimer's disease through the production of new brain cells and the strengthening of neural networks, according to a new Spanish study.

Mercedes Unzeta, a professor in the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB) claims that the study showed that a diet based on polyphenols and fatty acids, when compared to those in the control group, had more cell growth in the olfactory bulb and the hippocampus, both of which are damaged in patients with Alzheimer's disease.

The researchers maintain that their results show that the diet is capable of inducing the generation of new cells in the adult brain, and of strengthening the neural networks which become affected with age and in neurodegenerative processes such as Alzheimer's disease, as well as protecting neurons from oxidative and neural damage, which they say have been associated with many diseases affecting the central nervous system.

The team claims the results give support to the hypothesis that a diet made up of foods rich in polyphenols such as grapes, olive oil, cocoa, nuts as well as poly-unsaturated fatty acids from oily fish and vegetables such as corn and soya beans could

delay the onset of this disease or even slow down its evolution.

The study will be published in next month's issue of the *Journal of Alzheimer's disease*.

The UAB researchers said that the main objective of this study was to evaluate the effect of a polyphenol and fatty acid enriched diet on the neurogenesis of the brain of an adult mouse.

They said that they used two groups of mice for the study, with one being given a normal diet the other was given the same diet enriched with a cream (LMN) composed of a mixture of natural products including dried fruit and nuts, coconut, vegetable oils and flour rich in soluble fibre, which they said was developed by the Tarragona based company La Morella Nuts.

Both groups were fed over a duration of 40 days, which the authors claim is equivalent to approximately five years in humans.

Biochemical and molecular analysis techniques were used to detect different neuronal markers.

The team claimed "The analyses carried out in different brain regions demonstrated that those fed with LMN cream had a significantly higher amount of stem cells, as well as new differentiated cells, in the olfactory bulb and hippocampus," said the researchers.

