

Green tea helps beat superbugs

Green tea can help beat superbugs according to Egyptian scientists speaking today at the Society for General Microbiology's 162nd meeting being held this week at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre.

The pharmacy researchers have shown that drinking green tea helps the action of important antibiotics in their fight against resistant superbugs, making them up to three times more effective.

Green tea is a very common beverage in Egypt, and it is quite likely that patients will drink green tea while taking antibiotics. The medical researchers wanted to find out if green tea would interfere with the action of the antibiotics, have no effect, or increase the medicines' effects.

“We tested green tea in combination with antibiotics against 28 disease causing micro-organisms belonging to two different classes,” says Dr Mervat Kassem from the Faculty of Pharmacy at Alexandria University in Egypt. “In every single case green tea enhanced the bacteria-killing activity of the antibiotics. For example the killing effect of chloramphenicol was 99.99% better when taken with green tea than when taken on its own in some circumstances.”

Green tea also made 20% of drug-resistant bacteria susceptible to one of the cephalosporin antibiotics. These are important antibiotics that new drug resistant strains of bacteria have evolved to resist.

The results surprised the researchers, showing that in almost every case and for all types of antibiotics tested, drinking green tea at the same time as taking the medicines seemed to reduce the bacteria's drug resistance, even in superbug strains, and increase the action of the antibiotics. In some cases, even a low concentration of green tea was effective.

“Our results show that we should consider more seriously the natural products we consume in our everyday life,” says Dr Kassem. “In the future, we will be looking at other natural herb products such as marjoram and thyme to see whether they also contain active compounds which can help in the battle against drug resistant bacteria”.

Source: Society for General Microbiology

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