

News and Views

Cognitive and Heart Benefits of Blueberries

Eating a handful of blueberries daily lowers blood pressure (BP) and improves vascular and cerebral blood flow leading to better cardiovascular and cognitive health, according to a recent study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.¹

Researchers from the UK, Germany and Portugal collaborated in this randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial to evaluate the beneficial effects of blueberries. For this, they enrolled 61 healthy older adults aged 65 to 80 years, who were randomly assigned to receive a drink constituted from 26 g of freeze-dried wild blueberry powder (equivalent of 178 g of whole blueberries containing 302 mg anthocyanins) or a matched placebo but with no anthocyanins for a duration of 12 weeks.

After 12 weeks, there was a substantial increase in the flow-mediated dilation (FMD), a measure to evaluate endothelial function, in the participants in the blueberry group compared to the placebo group (0.86%). The 24-hour ambulatory systolic BP also decreased by 3.59 mmHg. No difference was noted for arterial stiffness and blood lipids between the two groups. Participants who consumed blueberries showed enhanced “immediate recall on the auditory verbal learning task, alongside better accuracy on a task-switch task”. But no improvement was seen in delayed recall. Subjects in the blueberries group also exhibited higher total 24-hour urinary polyphenol levels compared to placebo after 12 weeks.

These findings demonstrate the cardio- and neuroprotective effects of blueberries. The daily intake of 178 g of fresh blueberries in this study lowered BP and improved blood vessel function, which also boosted cognitive function in older adults in the form of improved executive function and better short-term memory.

The beneficial effects of blueberries have been attributed to their anthocyanin content. Anthocyanins are red, blue or purple pigments found in fruits and vegetables and are potent antioxidants. Additionally, they have antidiabetic, anticancer, anti-

inflammatory, antiangiogenesis, antimicrobial and antiobesity properties. They also play an important role in maintaining good vision.² Other sources of anthocyanins are purple vegetables, raspberries, strawberries and red grapes.

References

1. Wood E, et al. Wild blueberry (poly)phenols can improve vascular function and cognitive performance in healthy older males and females: a double-blind randomized controlled trial. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2023;S0002-9165(23)46300-9.
2. Khoo HE, et al. Anthocyanidins and anthocyanins: colored pigments as food, pharmaceutical ingredients, and the potential health benefits. *Food Nutr Res*. 2017;61(1):1361779.

Study Reveals Beneficial Effects of Changing the Existing Medication among Hypertensive Patients

According to recent research published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, the effect of changing medications can be twice as powerful as increasing the patient's existing medication dose.

The study involved 280 patients. During the course of a year, each of these patients tested four different BP medications, one after the other. The researchers discovered that the treatment's efficacy varied greatly from person to person and that certain people attained reduced BP with one medicine rather than another. A change in medication can help BP-lowering therapy patients far more than raising the amount of their existing medication.

The study found that if a patient is given the proper BP medication, they can drop their BP and, in turn could provide better protection against potential cardiovascular illnesses sooner. The study's findings call into question the present treatment paradigm, which recommends four medication groups equally warmly for all individuals with high BP.

(Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/health/changing-medication-more-effective-for-blood-pressure-treatment-study-101681279971951.html>)

