

# RESEARCH ROUNDUP



It's our goal here at *Good Health Lifestyles* to bring you the latest in cutting-edge research for a variety of common health issues. Because we believe that knowledge is power—especially when it comes to health—we are digging deeper into the exciting new research from leading medical journals and breaking it down to help you get the most from today's science.

## Is Propolis a Brain Booster?

### THE STUDY ABSTRACT:

**Asama T, Hiraoka T, Ohkuma A, Okumura N, Yamaki A, Urakami K. Cognitive Improvement and Safety Assessment of a Dietary Supplement Containing Propolis Extract in Elderly Japanese: A Placebo-Controlled, Randomized, Parallel-Group, Double-Blind Human Clinical Study. *Evid Based Complement Alternat Med.* 2021 Feb 24;2021:6664217.**

**OBJECTIVES:** This study aimed to evaluate the effect of propolis on cognitive function in elderly Japanese with a placebo-controlled design.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS:** This study was performed on 79 elderly Japanese. Participants orally received either a placebo or dietary supplement containing propolis extract for 24 weeks. Cognitive function assessed by Cognitrix and various blood or urine markers were measured at pre- and postadministration.

### RESULTS AND CONCLUSION:

Eligible data from 68 subjects (placebo: 33, propolis: 35) who completed the study were analyzed. Compared to the placebo group, the propolis group showed significant improvement in verbal memory in Cognitrix ( $P=0.028$ ). Total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, urea nitrogen, creatinine, and uric acid were significantly improved in the propolis group compared to the placebo group ( $P = 0.011$ ,  $P = 0.004$ ,  $P = 0.048$ ,  $P = 0.045$ , and  $P = 0.005$ , respectively). However, urea nitrogen, creatinine, and uric acid fluctuated within the normal level. Furthermore, a subgroup analysis was performed on those with higher than 100 of the standardized score of the neurocognitive index indicated by the overall Cognitrix score. Significant improvements in the propolis group compared to placebo were confirmed in verbal memory ( $P = 0.007$ ) and processing speed as indications for information processing ability, complex attention, and concentration ( $P = 0.029$ ). No side effects were observed in any of the groups. This study demonstrates that propolis is effective in improving cognitive functions such as memory, information processing, complex attention, and concentration in elderly Japanese.

### WHAT THIS MEANS TO YOU:

Propolis is used by bees to help build and maintain their

hives and is rich in healthy natural compounds. Its name in Greek means “defender of the city,” and its health profile shows why. Propolis has natural antibacterial and antiviral actions that help preserve the health of the hive structure and the bees that live there.

Left to its own natural state, propolis would vary greatly in the makeup of compounds and contain beeswax and other materials that would reduce its effectiveness. But when properly filtered to remove wax and other impurities and then standardized (like EP300 Propolis, for example), it provides a consistent level of compounds, including flavonoids and phenolic acids—the prime movers of antioxidant activity in propolis.

Much of the research about propolis revolves around its ability to stop bacterial and viral infections. But it does much more than that. A clinical study in Japan showed that propolis improved verbal memory, attention span, and concentration in elderly individuals. Propolis reduced total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol, and uric acid levels as well. The researchers also noted that the propolis extract did not trigger side effects, making it a potentially valuable natural medicine for anyone interested in preserving cognitive strength as they get older. ■

