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NEW RESEARCH SHOWS TREE NUTS MAY PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE HEALTH OF PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

Researchers at the University of Toronto and St. Michael's Hospital Present New Findings on Nuts and Diabetes at Experimental Biology Conference in New Orleans, LA

DAVIS, CA, April 15, 2009 – While nuts have been shown to help reduce the risk of heart disease, new findings, which will be presented this week at the Experimental Biology Annual Meeting in New Orleans, LA, suggest that they may also play an important role in the management of diabetes. Researchers from the University of Toronto and St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, Canada, will show that nuts may improve blood lipid levels and possibly blood sugar levels in individuals with non-insulin dependent diabetes.

According to Cyril Kendall, Ph.D., of the University of Toronto, "This is the largest study done to date looking at the effect of tree nuts (almonds, Brazils, cashews, hazelnuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, macadamias and walnuts) and peanuts on Type 2 diabetes."

The study was a 3-month parallel design with 117 non-insulin dependent adults with diabetes (men and women with a mean age of 62 years) who were all being treated with oral hypoglycemic medications. The subjects were each randomized to one of three diets for three months. The first diet included a supplement of 75g (~2½ ounces or ½ cup) of mixed nuts; the second diet included 38g (~1⅓ ounces or ¼ cup) of mixed nuts and half portion of muffins; and the third diet contained a full portion of muffins. Each supplement provided approximately 450 calories per 2,000 calorie diet. All

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of the diets contained roughly the same number of calories but the nuts provided more unsaturated (i.e. healthy) fat and less carbohydrate.

The goal of the study was to determine if nuts improve glycemic control in non-insulin dependent diabetes, as assessed by HbA1c (a marker of blood sugar control over the previous three months) and to ascertain whether these outcomes relate to improvements in cardiovascular health.

The study findings revealed that the full dose nut group had significantly reduced LDL and total cholesterol levels compared to the full dose muffin group. And, there was a significant reduction in HbA1c from baseline in the full dose nuts compared to the other two diets.

"If improvements in glycemic control can be achieved by dietary changes, this would make a substantial contribution to the treatment of those with Type 2 diabetes," stated Dr. Kendall.

Numerous studies have shown that consuming tree nuts may reduce the risk of heart disease. In 2003 tree nuts received a qualified health claim from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) which states, "Scientific evidence suggests but does not prove that eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease." Interestingly, individuals with Type 2 diabetes have a 2-8 fold higher risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD) compared with nondiabetic individuals of similar age, sex and ethnicity.

According to Maureen Ternus, M.S., R.D., Executive Director of the International Tree Nut Council Nutrition Research & Education Foundation (INC NREF), "While we've known for years that eating 1.5 ounces of nuts per day can help reduce the risk for heart disease, these new findings show that consuming nuts may now be helpful in controlling Type 2 diabetes as well."

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represent the nine tree nuts (almonds, Brazils, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamias, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios and walnuts) in more than 40 producing countries. For more information, please visit our website at www.nuthealth.org.

Editor's Note: **Available:**

- Full study abstract
- Complete tree nut research reference list
- Interviews with Cyril Kendall, Ph.D. and Maureen Ternus, M.S., R.D.