Hangover Remedy May Protect the Liver Against Alcohol Harms

This finding from a mouse study suggests that the supplement DHM could be used to mitigate the effects of alcohol abuse on the liver.

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A study conducted in mice has found evidence that a popular hangover remedy supplement protects the liver in numerous ways. This finding suggests that the over-the-counter herbal supplement dihydromyricetin (DHM), also known as ampelopsin, could be used to mitigate the effects of alcohol abuse on the liver.

Researchers from the University of Southern California School of Pharmacy fed 36 mice alcohol each day for two months, gradually raising the dose until the animals were receiving 30% of their caloric intake from alcohol. Then the scientists assessed the mice's livers for markers of stress.

Publishing their findings in Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, the investigators found that DHM, which derives from a fruit from the Japanese raisin tree, activates a "cascade of mechanisms that erase alcohol from the body very quickly," as Jin Liang, MD, PhD, of the USC of Pharmacy, said in a press release.

The investigators found that DHM prompted the liver to produce more enzymes that digest ethanol; improved the efficiency of two such enzymes so that they could reduce ethanol to simpler forms more easily eliminated by the body; lowered the accumulation of fat in the liver; and reduced the level of cytokines, a central component of inflammation.

"In total, these findings support the utility of DHM as a dietary supplement to reduce ethanol-induced liver injury via changes in lipid metabolism, enhancement of ethanol metabolism and suppressing inflammation responses to promote liver health," the study authors wrote. "This line of research suggests that DHM acts on multiple pathways to promote liver health and counteract ethanol injury."

To read a press release about the study, click here.

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