

News Release

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UH CANCER CENTER EVALUATES NONI

UH Cancer Center researchers test if noni extract could potentially help prostate cancer patients

HONOLULU – Researchers evaluate if noni has properties that can help fight cancer in early-stage prostate cancer patients in a University of Hawai'i Cancer Center study.

"There has been such strong belief through generations of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders that the noni fruit possesses healing properties. Past laboratory research found anti-cancer properties in noni extract," said Jeffrey Huang, Pharm D., Principal Investigator and Assistant Specialist in the Clinical Sciences and Translational Research Program at the UH Cancer Center. "In our current Phase II study, we want to see if these properties will work in a specific type of cancer."

Prior Phase I Clinical Trial Study

In an initial Phase I clinical trial, researchers searched for the optimal tolerated dose of noni extract for cancer patients who could participate in Phase II clinical trials. A self-reported questionnaire evaluated fatigue levels, pain measurements, and other effects of the Phase I trial. The recommended dosage will now be administered in the current Phase II trial to patients with very low and low risk prostate cancer.

Smartphone App

UH Cancer Center, noni fruit extract capsules

"In our initial study of noni fruit extract for patients with advanced cancer, we found

no evidence that noni caused their cancer to melt away. However, we would now like to see if there is evidence that it could slow down cancer progression" said Dr. Brian Issell, researcher and former director of the UH Cancer Center who led the very first clinical trial of noni in cancer patients. "This new study will test to see if there is evidence that noni may prevent low risk prostate cancer patients from progressing to higher risk disease."

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer among men in Hawaii. About 800 men are diagnosed with the disease and more than 100 die from it each year. There are more than 220,000 estimated new cases of the disease in 2015 according to the National Cancer Institute.

Current Phase II Clinical Trial Study

The current Phase II study will evaluate the genes within the tumors of the participants to predict the aggressiveness of the disease by measuring the Genomic Prostate Score (GPS). The score tests a panel of different genes specific for prostate cancer. Patients will get the score before and after the study to see if there is an improvement in their health.

"There's been a lot of debate on how to treat patients with early stage prostate cancer, termed 'very low risk' or 'low risk'. One option is watchful waiting, or 'active surveillance'," said Huang. "But, if a patient hears a word like 'cancer', they usually don't want to just sit back and wait, and hope for the best. They want to take ownership and feel like they can help themselves. This study will hopefully add to the treatment options for future prostate cancer patients to improve their quality of life."

"Bringing this study to the people of Hawai'i is yet another example as to how UH Cancer Center is fulfilling its mission as a NCI-designated cancer center" said Dr. Charles J. Rosser, Director of Clinical Trials Office at UH Cancer Center.

Smartphone App

Micheal Harvey, Healing Noni

This yearlong trial will have 30 participants; most of them will be Hawai'i residents. The trial will be administered at local hospitals and physician offices. The clinical trial opened in late December 2015.

Noni from the Big Island

Healing Noni is providing the fruit extract in capsule form for the study. "We have been farming noni on the Big Island for more than 17 years. Many people have shared with me their personal positive experiences with the fruit. To have clinical trials with noni is crucial and it will be wonderful to more scientifically understand how it may help with healing the body," said owner Michael Harvey.

The University of Hawai'i Cancer Center is one of 69 research institutions designated by the National Cancer Institute. Affiliated with the University of Hawai'i at Manoa, the center is dedicated to eliminating cancer through research, education, and improved patient care. Learn more at www.uhcancercenter.org. Like us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/UHCancerCenter. Follow us on [Twitter @UHCancerCenter](https://twitter.com/UHCancerCenter).