

Aztec-derived grain may cut heart risks from diabetes

November 21, 2007

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - People with type 2 diabetes may lessen their cardiovascular risk by eating a whole grain originating from the ancient Aztecs, researchers from the Canadian researchers suggest.

They attribute eating Salba, as two of the three recommended daily portions of whole grains, with reduced systolic blood pressure and attenuated cardiovascular risk factors among individuals with well-controlled type 2 diabetes.

“All our subjects continued their usual treatment over the duration of the study,” co-investigator Dr. Alexandra L. Jenkins told Reuters Health. The effects seen with Salba were in addition to intensive conventional medical treatment, added Jenkins, of St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto.

Salba is a whole grain developed from *Salvia hispanica* L. and produced by Salba Corporation, Buenos Aires, Argentina. The grain is a rich source of fiber, omega-3 fatty acids, calcium, magnesium, iron, and antioxidants

A total of 11 men and 9 women, about 64 years old on average with well-controlled type 2 diabetes, consumed either 37 grams/day of Salba or wheat bran for 12-weeks. After a wash-out period, the participants switched treatments for another 12 weeks.

Otherwise, the participants did not alter their lifestyle or physical activity, the investigators report in *Diabetes Care*.

Systolic blood pressure significantly decreased by 6.3 mm Hg on average during Salba use. Moreover, the investigators found that Salba eased factors associated with inflammation and blood clotting, and improved glycemic control.

“Salba has a long history of human use (with) no present contraindications for individuals with diabetes or the general public,” Jenkins said. However, she noted research in larger populations is needed to confirm the health benefits of Salba.