

coriolus – the cancer fighter

This mushroom extract is a powerful immune booster which prevents cancer and stops it from coming back. Jane Carstens reports on the latest research.



Mushrooms have long been used therapeutically in traditional medicine. In the 21st century, where scientific findings are increasingly needed to give alternative treatments credibility, the mushroom *Coriolus versicolor* is a standout. Also known as *Trametes versicolor*, *yun zhi* in China, *kawaratake* in Japan and Turkey Tail in Europe and America, it has been the subject of more than 300 published studies that have documented its immune-enhancing properties.

Intriguing extract

Polysaccharide-K (PSK) is the immunotherapeutic agent extracted from *Coriolus versicolor*. It is also part of a class of immunomodulators known as 'biological response modifiers', which stimulate immune function and anti-cancer activities. PSK's ability to enhance cellular immune function and stimulate the immune system helps the body maintain a correct balance between cellular and humoral immunity (i.e. antibody production and all the processes that accompany it).

Professor Thomas Borody, gastroenterologist and director of Sydney's PSK Information Foundation as well as the Centre for Digestive Diseases, says that when he looked at the evidence to back up PSK, he found it satisfied the criteria that he had been trained to seek; there were no toxic effects, it was clinically well tolerated, and - while it is not a cancer cure - it helps significantly.

"We are seeing an interesting trend at the moment, and it is not necessarily always good," he says.

"Many medical practices are diversifying into integrative medical centers where doctors prescribe vitamin injections, herbal teas, and supplements. But do they help?

Anecdotally, some patients are convinced, but where's the hard science? In the meantime, this very well-researched immune-enhancer has been prescribed as an adjunct to cancer treatments in Japan for decades and we, in Australia, have been

oblivious to it. And perhaps many would feel more comfortable keeping it that way. Talk about immune-enhancing mushrooms to a room full of oncologists, as I did at the Medical Oncology Group of Australia's conference, and you can almost hear the eyebrows lifting!"

Borody says the evidence stacks up enough for him to keep talking until doctors start to listen and patients get the benefit of this mushroom. He adds that significant increases in overall survival and disease-free survival rates have been reported in patients given PSK, with no significant side effects reported. "In fact, another recent study on the effects of PSK on immune parameters has reported that the omission of PSK from the standard cancer treatment regime was a significant risk factor for recurrence of metastasis in patients with colorectal cancer," he says.



BREAKING NEWS

And there's more ... a new study to be published in the journal *Cancer Immunology Immunotherapy* analysed the results from more than 8,000 patients who took part in eight randomised controlled trials.

The researchers found that gastric cancer patients who add PSK to their chemotherapy treatment have improved survival rates. The aim of the study was to compare post-surgery patients who only had chemotherapy treatments to those who had both chemotherapy and PSK. The six authors of the study's report said that the addition of PSK to standard chemotherapy treatments offered significant advantages in survival over chemotherapy alone for patients with curative resection of gastric cancers. Gastric cancer is one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths worldwide, second only to lung cancer.

An Australian-manufactured brand of PSK, called Trammune, is now listed with the Australian Register of Therapeutic Goods (TGA). The literature on the drug says it may be of assistance to: improve the body's defence due to a weak immune system; patients suffering from post-surgical stress; travellers who are affected by stress, infection and fatigue; those who suffer from poor appetite and fatigue; and people who want to remain healthy. PSK Trammune is available online (www.psktrammune.com.au) and through selected pharmacies.

For more information, visit

www.pskmushroom.info (contains scientific and clinical information for medical practitioners),

email sales@psktrammune.com.au, or call

02 9418 7300 or 02 9418 7303.



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BREAKING NEWS

The results of the published studies into the benefits of PSK are:

Colorectal cancer PSK reduces the death rate in colorectal cancer by 29 per cent and recurrence rates by 28 per cent, compared with chemotherapy alone¹. Patients who added PSK to their chemotherapy treatment had a 60 per cent survival rate after five years, compared to patients on chemotherapy alone, who had 32.1 per cent survival rate².

Gastric cancer Patients who added PSK to their chemotherapy treatment had a 73 per cent survival rate after five years, compared to patients on chemotherapy alone, who had a 60 per cent survival rate³.

Breast cancer Patients who added PSK to their chemotherapy treatment had an 81 per cent survival rate after 10 years, compared to patients on chemotherapy alone, who had a 65 per cent survival rate⁴. However, breast cancer patients identified as having the HLA-B40 antigen had a much better result. HLA-B40-positive patients who added PSK to their treatment had a 100 per cent survival rate after 10 years, compared with 55 per cent survival rate for chemotherapy alone⁵.

Lung cancer (non-small cell) Patients who added PSK to their radiotherapy treatment had a 27 per cent survival rate after five years, compared to patients on radiotherapy alone, who had a 7 percent survival rate⁶.

Oesophageal cancer Patients who added PSK to their radiotherapy treatment had a 39 per cent survival rate after five years, compared to patients on radiotherapy alone, who had a 31 per cent survival rate⁷.

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