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Berries Very Beneficial for Mental Health

Berries increase levels of brain's dopamine chemical compound

A group of researchers at the University of Tufts recently found that almost all types of berries are beneficial for mental health by improving the cognitive function and preventing degenerative mental conditions such as Alzheimer's or dementia. Previous studies showed that berries contain flavonoids, anthocyanin and glucoquinine that help preventing or treating vascular and blood disorders like varicose veins, venous thrombosis, angina, capillary fragility. Flavonoids are a class of naturally occurring plant compounds that function as antioxidants. They are plant pigments and even if they are not labeled as essential nutrients, they enhance the processing of vitamin C, which is itself a powerful antioxidant. Flavonoids are also needed to maintain capillary walls and protect against infections. Deficiency of flavonoids may lead to easily bruising. Berries are also known to improve visual accuracy, improve blood circulation to the eyes and the nervous system and can prevent or fight against eye disorders such as: retinitis pigmentosa, glaucoma, myopia etc. This happens because anthocyanins are responsible for protecting the tissues of the retina of the eye against free radical damage. The nutrients and vitamins in berries also have anti-infective and anti-inflammatory actions, fighting successfully against urinary tract infections - like cystitis. Berry juice contains "antibiotic" substances called proanthocyanidins that annihilate the *Escherichia coli* bacteria which cause urinary tract infections and prevent these bacteria from adhering to the mucosal cells lining the urinary tract. However, the new study conducted in 60 young male rats showed that berries intake is also very beneficial for preserving one's the mental ability. Researchers divided the 60 rats in 3 groups which further received different diets: one group received only the chow dish with no berries, the second group received both chow and berries and the third group received only berries with no chow. Results showed that rats in the group receiving only berries improved their cognitive function and an increase in their brain dopamine level was observed. Low levels of dopamine in the brain may cause memory, attention and mental skills disorders. Even if the study was only applied on rats, scientists who lead the study say that this discovery could help to preserving the health of the brain and preventing memory degeneration. They also noted that all berries may be beneficial for the brain, not only some types.