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Researchers Recommend Additional Study on the use of Soy Protein to Prevent Prostate Cancer

CINJ Scientists Look at Relationship Between Soy Supplement Powder and Testosterone Levels

New Brunswick, N.J., July 16, 2007 –Researchers at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey are urging more study of the use of soy protein powder in respect to the prevention of prostate cancer. This recommendation by Susan Goodin, PharmD, FCCP, BCOP, director of pharmaceutical sciences at CINJ and associate professor of medicine at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and her team of investigators, follows the recent release of a published paper (*Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev* 2007; 16(4). April 2007) pertaining to their study of healthy males and their use of soy protein supplement powder.

The research evaluated whether a readily available over-the-counter soy protein supplement had clinical activity in the form of decreasing testosterone in healthy men. Testosterone affects the levels of Prostate Specific Antigen, or PSA, in men with prostate cancer. Soy, which contains a form of the female sex hormone estrogen, is being evaluated in clinical trials for the prevention of prostate cancer. Previous studies involving soy-based therapies have not consistently revealed an effect on testosterone.

A dozen healthy men over age 18 were selected for the six-week study, in which for four weeks they consumed two scoops of pure soy protein powder each day (mixed with a beverage). Throughout the study, testosterone levels and those of a hormone that regulates the release of testosterone were measured and were found to have decreased over the four weeks in which the powder was being ingested. Those levels rose again in the remaining two weeks when the soy protein was no longer in their system.

Goodin noted the study is a significant first step to better understanding the role a soy supplement has on testosterone levels, but that more research is needed, “The findings in this study certainly warrant a closer look at the effects of a soy supplement not only on prostate health – and the possible prevention of prostate cancer -- but also on fertility and risk factors for cardiovascular disease.” She also pointed out that over-the-counter protein supplements are unregulated and products may differ in composition and quality; therefore, it would be beneficial to confirm and test other soy products and to have further study relating to normal health in general.

Robert DiPaola, M.D., chief, division of medical oncology, executive director of the Dean and Betty Gallo Prostate Cancer Center at CINJ and professor of medicine, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, also authored the study. According to the American Cancer Society, one in six men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer in their lifetime. DiPaola said that is reason enough for more study to take place, “Along with any implications for the prevention and/or treatment of prostate cancer, overall health also needs to be the focus of such research. The use of such supplements as soy protein powder is

becoming more of a norm than a passing trend. Because that is the case, we feel a commitment to find out the benefits and risks of consuming these products. Given the difficulties in the study of such products, however, a true understanding can only be gained through carefully conducted and confirmed research.”

About The Cancer Institute of New Jersey

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is the state’s first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer. CINJ’s physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice quite literally bringing research to life. The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is a Center of Excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. To support CINJ, please call The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Foundation at 1-888-333-CINJ.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Network is comprised of hospitals throughout the state and provides a mechanism to rapidly disseminate important discoveries into the community. Partner Hospitals: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, Atlantic Health (Morristown Memorial Hospital and Overlook Hospital). Affiliate Hospitals: Bayshore Community Hospital, ContraState Healthcare System, Cooper University Hospital,* Jersey Shore University Medical Center, JFK Medical Center, Mountainside Hospital, Raritan Bay Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton (CINJ-Hamilton), Saint Peter’s University Hospital, Somerset Medical Center, Southern Ocean County Hospital, The University Hospital/UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School*, and University Medical Center at Princeton. *Academic Affiliate

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