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## CHERRIES MAY PROVIDE A DRUG-FREE MEANS OF HELPING TO HANDLE ARTHRITIS PAIN

Millions of Americans suffer from the pain of osteoarthritis and spend billions of dollars annually on over-the-counter and prescription medications to find relief. Now, researchers in Dallas, Texas, have determined that there may be a much more natural and drug-free solution available. The solution for this discomfort could come from the Montmorency tart cherry.

Osteoarthritis is considered to be the most common type of arthritis. Pain in the hands, feet, spine, and the major weight-bearing joints such as the hips and the knees is most common for individuals suffering from the degenerative effects of the disease.

In order to find non-drugging solutions for the estimated 27 million American osteoarthritis sufferers, a pilot study was conducted in 2007 at the Baylor Research Institute in Dallas, Texas. The natural pain reliever that was being tested was a pill form of ground whole Montmorency cherries. Participants were asked to take this potential pain reliever for a period of 8 weeks. The positive results of the pilot program were that over half of the subjects experienced significant improvement in pain and function by the end of the study period.

“The current treatment of osteoarthritis is largely focused on controlling pain through use of over-the-counter acetaminophen or prescription pain medications as well as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs,” said John J. Cush, M.D., who is a rheumatologist and the study leader. “These conventional medications are widely used, but have not been shown to alter the natural history of the disease. In some cases, overuse may contribute to significant gastrointestinal, cardiovascular, hematological, renal and liver toxicity.”

The promising results of this pilot are now generating more research into the positive effects of this cherry supplement. A new study is now in the forming stages that will more extensively test the cherry pain reliever against a placebo. The study will add additional information to previous research that has shown the positive effects of cherries as a pain reliever. “This specific type of tart cherry is one of the best studied natural products and, anecdotally, has been claimed to have a salutary effect on osteoarthritis and other types of arthritis as well,” said Dr. Cush.

Through the ages, natural remedies for what ails a person have been used in many cultures around the globe. Studies like this one will help to shed more light on solutions that may have been lost over time and unfortunately replaced by pharmaceutical remedies.