



Natural Standard

The Authority on Integrative Medicine

Welcome to **Natural Standard's** monthly newsletter. **Natural Standard** provides high quality, evidence-based information about complementary and alternative therapies. For more information please visit www.naturalstandard.com.

[Javafit Coffee](#)
[Marijuana for Alzheimer's](#)
[Cancer Victims may Benefit from Sunlight](#)
[Natural Standard Awarded SIO Conference](#)
[Shark Cartilage HSPH Career Fair](#)
[Moderate Alcohol Intake May Keep Older Women Sharp](#)
[Alternative Medicine Research Report](#)
[CAM Symposium](#)
[Inside Natural Standard](#)

Javafit Coffee



Catherine (Kate) Ulbricht, co-founder of **Natural Standard**, was interviewed last month by 7News (WHDH-TV) about a new coffee that is promoted to help people lose weight. Javafit is made from a blend of ingredients, including chromium, gacinia combogia and citrus aurantium. The following is a transcript from the news story that aired on February 18, 2005.

REPORTER: "For many of us coffee is crucial to wake us up and pick us up throughout the day. Now a new Java is promising to not only give us a boost, but also help us lose weight. But not everyone is happy about what's in the brew."

MYTE RUGGIERE, COFFEE DRINKER: "It gets me going for the rest of my day."

REPORTER: "Myte Ruggiere's morning coffee not only wakes her up...it may be helping her keep her weight down. She's drinking a new coffee called JavaFit. It's made with dietary supplements and as much as 150 milligrams of extra caffeine."

JOSE ANTONIO, PH.D, CSO, JAVALUTION COFFEE COMPANY: "We are basically promoting fitness and part of the fitness can be consuming the coffee with the nutraceuticals, engaging in an exercise program and cleaning up your diet."

REPORTER: "An Ohio research group tested the burn extreme version with 10 healthy drinkers. For up to 3 hours after drinking the coffee, appetites decreased and metabolic rates increased by as much as 30 percent. More in-depth studies are now in the works."

JOSE ANTONIO, PH.D, CSO, JAVALUTION COFFEE COMPANY: "Over a 4-8 week period we've actually seen a weight loss, a fat loss of about 5 pounds and this was coupled with an exercise program."

REPORTER: "But a Cambridge expert on dietary supplements says there's no conclusive evidence the ingredients in the coffee help you lose weight."

DR. CATHERINE ULBRICHT, NATURAL STANDARD: "I personally wouldn't use it."

REPORTER: "And she worries about what's in the brew. One ingredient, citrus aurantium, also

known as bitter orange, is the chemical cousin to the now banned Ephedra."

DR. CATHERINE ULBRICHT, NATURAL STANDARD: "Increased risk of cardiovascular side effects. Increased blood pressure, there has been some cases of possible association of myocardial infarction which is a heart attack."

REPORTER: "A JavaFit scientist tells 7News the coffee has a low dose of the supplements. And the study on the burn extreme drinkers shows no apparent negative cardiovascular effects. As for Myte - she claims she lost 5 pounds in less than 2 weeks."

MYTE RUGGIERE, COFFEE DRINKER: "My intensity level of my work-outs had increased."

REPORTER: "If you plan to try JavaFit talk with your doctor first and limit your intake to a couple cups a day."

This news story was reported by Caterina Bandini and produced by Christina Mattingly of 7News.

[Click here to watch the video](#)

Marijuana for Alzheimer's



The active ingredient in marijuana may delay the mental decline caused by Alzheimer's disease, new research suggests.

Scientists found that a synthetic version of the compound may reduce inflammation associated with the disease, which may in turn, stall or prevent the neurodegenerative process. Researchers from Madrid's Complutense University and the Cajal Institute compared the brain tissue of patients who died from Alzheimer's disease and those who were healthy and died at a similar age.

Scientists looked at the brain cell receptors that cannabinoids (neuroprotective agents against excitotoxicity and brain damage) bind to. They also examined structures called microglia, which activate the brain's immune response. Microglia collect near the plaque deposits associated with Alzheimer's disease. When microglia are active they cause inflammation.

The functionality of cannabinoid receptors in brain tissue infected with the disease was significantly reduced, researches found. This indicated that patients were no longer able to experience the cannabinoids' protective effects.

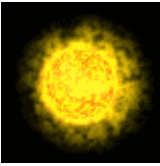
Researches then tested the effect of cannabinoids on rats injected with the amyloid protein, which forms Alzheimer's plaques. The scientists concluded that the amyloid protein in the rats' brains activated immune cells. However, the rats that were also given cannabinoids showed no sign of microglia activation.

The researchers found that cannabinoids counteracted the activation of microglia, and therefore, reduced swelling.

The results, which are published in the [Journal of Neuroscience](#), found that cannabinoids work to prevent inflammation and to protect the brain, which may lead the way to new therapies for patients with Alzheimer's disease.

References: 1) Belén G. Ramírez, Cristina Blázquez, Teresa Gómez del Pulgar, et al. Prevention of Alzheimer's Disease Pathology by Cannabinoids: Neuroprotection Mediated by Blockade of Microglial Activation. 25(8):1904-1913; doi:10.1523/JNEUROSCI.4540-04.2005. [View Abstract](#).

Cancer Victims may Benefit from Sunlight



Exposure to sunlight, which is a serious risk factor for the potentially fatal skin cancer, melanoma, may also help victims survive the disease, new research published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* suggests. The findings of a second study also indicate that sunlight exposure may reduce the risk of cancer of the lymph glands.

Researchers caution, however, that their findings do not mean people should spend extended periods of the time in the sun in an effort to prevent cancer.

Over the past century, as melanoma incidents have increased, studies have consistently found sun exposure to be a major risk factor for the disease. Yet, according to the study led by Marianne Berwick of the Department of Internal Medicine and the University of Mexico increased sun exposure may increase the chances of melanoma victims' survival. Berwick and her team of researchers studied 528 melanoma victims over the course of five years.

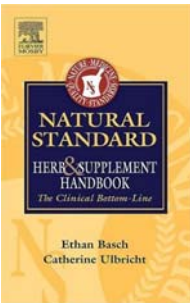
The second study, led by Karin Ekstrom Smedby of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, studied 3,000 lymph cancer patients and about 3,000 people without the disease in both Denmark and Sweden. The researchers found that an increased exposure to ultraviolet radiation by sunbathing resulted in a lower rate of non Hodgkins' lymphoma.

Berwick's research was supported by the U.S. National Cancer Institute and Smedby's was funded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, the Swedish Cancer Society, Plan Denmark and the Danish National Research Foundation.

References: 1) Karin Ekström Smedby, Henrik Hjalgrim, Mads Melbye, et al. Ultraviolet Radiation Exposure and Risk of Malignant Lymphomas. *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, Vol. 97, No. 3, 199- 209, February 2, 2005. [View Abstract](#).

2) Marianne Berwick, Bruce K. Armstrong, Leah Ben-Porat, et al. Sun Exposure and Mortality From Melanoma. *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, Vol. 97, No. 3, 195-199, February 2, 2005. [View Abstract](#).

Natural Standard Awarded



Natural Standard was honored at Northeastern University's annual Major Works Reception for two herbal supplement books recently published.

The reference book, "**Natural Standard** Herb and Supplement Reference: Evidence-Based Clinical Reviews," features 98 rigorously reviewed monographs. Each monograph grades the validity and quality of the evidence available about the herb or supplement. The second book, "**Natural Standard** Herb and Supplement Handbook: The Clinical Bottom Line," lays out the clinical facts of 91 highly used herbs and supplements. The handbook is a shorter version of the reference book, containing only the key facts and references.

Both books will be on display at the Board of Trustees meeting on June 3, 2005. In early fall, the books will be a part of a special display in the Northeastern University library, which showcases the work of NU faculty authors.

The reception took place on February 22, 2005 in the Raytheon Amphitheater, Eagan Center on Northeastern University campus in Boston.

SIO Conference



If you missed the 1st international conference of the Society for Integrative Oncology, conference sessions are now available for purchase in compact disc and audio cassette formats.

The three-day conference, which began on November 17, 2005, focused on topics such as complementary therapies for common physical and emotional symptoms, implementation of complementary therapies, botanicals in the treatment of cancer and complementary modalities for breast, prostate, gastrointestinal (GI) and lung cancer. The keynote speaker at the event was Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach, Director of the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md.

Individual sessions may be purchased for \$12-36, or a complete audio set package is available at \$249.00. [Click here to order.](#)

If you would like to us to post your events online, please e- mail: news@naturalstandard.com.

Shark Cartilage



The [Hartford Courant](#) newspaper interviewed Senior Editor, Catherine (Kate) Ulbricht, about shark cartilage last month. The following article, written by Courant staff writer Garret Condon, appeared in the February 22, 2005 edition.

Twice a day, a 74-year-old lung cancer patient in Eastern Connecticut goes to her fridge and pulls out a small white 4-ounce bottle of liquid and gulps it. Most of the people who have tasted the stuff describe the taste as "fishy." And no wonder.

The medicine she is helping to test is made from shark cartilage, and the placebo - she doesn't know which she's taking - is designed to taste the same. The patient, who asked that her name and town not be published, has a specific type of inoperable, non-small-cell lung cancer, which is a form of lung cancer that represents about a third of new lung cancer diagnoses, according to Dr. Robert Siegel, medical director of the Cancer Clinical Research Office at Hartford Hospital.

If the shark cartilage extract is found to extend the lives of these cancer patients, it will be one of the early success stories in the effort to scientifically test the claims of alternative medicine.

Shark cartilage was among the most-hyped natural products of the 1990s. Its potential as a cancer treatment, made famous by the book "Sharks Don't Get Cancer," co-authored by I. William Lane and Linda Comac, became the stuff of network news and helped fill the shelves of health-food stores with shark-cartilage pills and potions. They were touted not only for cancer but for other conditions, including psoriasis, pain and macular degeneration.

But it turned out that sharks do get cancer. And Lane and his son Andrew, his partner in the shark cartilage business, ran afoul of the Federal Trade Commission and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which accused the Lanes of making inappropriate cancer-fighting claims for cartilage products. To date, there has been little compelling evidence to support the effectiveness of shark-cartilage products.

During the early 1990s, Siegel says, cancer patients were constantly asking about using shark cartilage. "It was the request du jour for people looking for a fix to their illness," he said. And yet Siegel says that "there was a grain of truth to a lot of the hype."

A shark's skeleton is largely made of cartilage, a tissue that doesn't contain blood vessels. Therefore, there must be something about this substance that discourages the development of blood vessels. Tumors are fed by a new blood supply that they help create in a process called angiogenesis. Researchers wondered whether cartilage's blood-vessel-blocking properties could be unleashed in the vicinity of a tumor, shutting off angiogenesis and starving the tumor.

Siegel said that the popular interest in shark cartilage happened to dovetail with increased scientific interest in anti-angiogenesis as a weapon against cancer. Last year, the FDA approved Avastin, the first anti-angiogenesis drug for use (with chemotherapy) in colorectal cancer.

The Canadian drug maker Aeterna Zentaris had been working to find the active component in shark cartilage and came up with a product called AE-941, or Neovastat, made of a group of molecules derived from cartilage. The drug firm said it buys shark skeletons from fishermen who have caught the fish for meat off the coast of Argentina. Therefore, according to spokesman Paul Burroughs, making Neovastat doesn't create any additional demand for shark fishing - something that would concern conservationists.

Following promising early studies, the pharmaceutical firm teamed up with the National Cancer Institute to fund a large study four years ago. Congress had set money aside for such a trial. Although nearly 350 patients are enrolled, the study was planned to have more than 700 subjects. But it may end before it reaches that number, according to Dr. Charles Lu, assistant professor of medicine in the Department of Thoracic/Head and Neck Medical Oncology at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, the institution supervising the research.

Lu said that it is already one of the largest studies of its kind and that recruiting patients has been much more difficult than expected for a variety of reasons, including the fact that it is logistically difficult to work with patients who are getting both chemotherapy and radiation therapy, and therefore seeing a number of different specialists. Siegel echoed this sentiment, noting that there is only one active patient in the trial at Hartford Hospital. Of two previous subjects, one died and one dropped out. Until the results are in, the jury is out on shark cartilage. More than a year ago, another study of AE-941 in kidney cancer patients found that it did not extend their lives. In November, researchers from the Mayo Clinic reported that a different shark cartilage product did not improve the survival of people with incurable breast or colorectal cancer.

Even research that deep-sixes shark cartilage can be seen as a kind of victory, says Catherine Ulbricht. She is senior attending pharmacist at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston and chief editor and a co-founder of [Natural Standard](#), a subscription website that produces science-based consensus statements about natural products for pharmacists, physicians and others.

"Finding negative results is worthwhile too," she said, "because it will help cut down on some risks of patients using alternative therapies in the place of more proven therapies and potentially [worsening] their conditions."

[Click here for more news from the Courant](#)

HSPH Career Fair



The Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH) is hosting its annual Mini-Career Days Program March 7- 10, 2005. A wide range of employers will be exhibiting at the event. The Center for Disease Control-Minority & Women's Health, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and the American Cancer Society are just a few of the employers that will be a part of the event.

[Natural Standard](#) will also attend the fair on March 8, searching for medical writers, interns and business development professionals. The event is an opportunity to introduce [Natural Standard](#) to trainees entering the medical and public health field.

The career fair will be held in the atrium of the Kresge building from 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. For

more information, please e-mail bweissel@hsph.harvard.edu.

If you would like us to post your events online, please e-mail: news@naturalstandard.com.

Moderate Alcohol Intake May Keep Older Women Sharp



Alcohol may help protect against mental decline in older women, according to two new studies.

In the first study, researchers at Harvard University and Brigham and Women's Hospital recorded alcohol consumption among more than 11,000 women enrolled in the Nurses' Health Study. The study, led by Dr. Meir J. Stampfer, assessed the mental status of women who were 70 or older and used various tests of memory, verbal fluency and general mental skills over a six-year period starting in 1995.

The researchers found that women who consumed about one drink a day (up to 15 grams of alcohol) had significantly better test results. In fact, they scored about a year and a half younger than the nondrinkers and those who drank 15-30 grams a day. The study was published in the January 20, 2005 issue of [The New England Journal of Medicine](#).

The second study, published in the February 1, 2005 issue of the [American Journal of Epidemiology](#), reported similar results in a group of 4,461 women.

The study, led by Dr. Mark Espeland and his colleagues at Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, N.C., used different tests to evaluate mental abilities and found that women who had one drink a day scored higher than those who did not drink at all.

The reason for the beneficial effect of alcohol remains unclear. However, researchers believe the results are connected to the lower rates of cardiovascular disease among moderate drinkers. Alcohol appears to raise levels of H.D.L. cholesterol, ("good cholesterol") and may lower levels of blood clotting agents such as fibrinogen.

References: 1) Meir J. Stampfer, M.D.; Jae Hee Kang, Sc.D.; Jennifer Chen, M.P.H.; et al. Effects of Moderate Alcohol Consumption on Cognitive Function in Women. *NEJM* Vol. 352:245- 253, Jan. 20, 2005. [View Abstract](#).

2) Mark A. Espeland; Lin Gu, Kamal H. Masaki; Robert D. Langer; et al. Association between Reported Alcohol Intake and Cognition: Results from the Women's Health Initiative Memory Study. *American Journal of Epidemiology* 2005 161(3):228- 238. [View Abstract](#).

Alternative Medicine Research Report



The February issue of *Alternative Medicine Research Report* is here, featuring the latest scientific research and reports relating to alternative therapies.

One of the highlighted studies in this month's newsletter found that Vitamin C appears ineffective for common cold prevention and treatment. Other articles include a report on the safety and efficacy of fish oil and C-reactive protein and the American Herbal Products Association's (AHPA) comments on the FDA's draft guidance on claim substantiation.

Natural Standard's *Alternative Medicine Research Report* is a monthly print newsletter designed to help clinicians keep up-to-date with the latest research as well as the reimbursement and legislative developments surrounding complementary and alternative medicine. Each issue

features clinically relevant research reports, extensive citations and brief abstracts, timely coverage of complementary and alternative medicine's practical side and web references. The newsletter is available for sale online for \$259 for one year (12 issues).

[Click here to purchase online](#)

CAM Symposium



The University of Exeter in the United Kingdom will host the 12th Annual Symposium on Complementary Healthcare this September.

This year's event, organized by Professor Edzard Ernst's Complementary Medicine unit in Exeter, is open to anyone interested in Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM). The bulk of the event will consist of two days of platform and poster presentations. The symposium will feature original research and participants will have the opportunity to discuss key issues such as effectiveness, safety and costs related to CAM.

The symposium will take place September 19-21, 2005. Abstract submissions for platform and poster presentations are due by June 1, 2005. For more information, please contact Barbara Wider at +44 (0) 1392-424872, B.Wider@exeter.ac.uk or visit www.pms.ac.uk/compmed/symposium.

If you would like us to post your events online, please e-mail: news@naturalstandard.com.

Inside Natural Standard



New Team Member: **Natural Standard** welcomes a new team member this month. Peter Smith will be joining **Natural Standard** as the Director of Business Development. Smith has worked as an account manager and technical recruiter for the last four years. In addition, Smith has served for the United States Army as a logistical/movement manager. During that time, he received numerous awards, including three army commendation medals and a national defense medal. Smith's background experience and enthusiasm makes him the perfect fit for the position. Smith plans to be with **Natural Standard** long-term, and is excited to help the collaboration grow.

CAMEXPO: Natural Standard recently attended the International Complementary and Alternative Healthcare Conference in New York Last month. Over 100 exhibitors were present at the expo, which was held at the Grand Hyatt Hotel February 12-13. The next CAMEXPO will be at the Los Angeles Convention Center, October 6-9, 2005. For more information, please visit, www.camexpo.com.

Helping Tsunami Victims: **Natural Standard**, and nearly 100 companies in their Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC) office building, banded together last month to raise money for the tsunami victims in Asia. The event, "Boston-Cambridge Lends a Hand" was co-sponsored by [Oxfam America](#) and included a silent auction, live music and donated food and drinks from local sponsors. Over \$4,000 was donated to the tsunami victims.

Quick Links:

- [Natural Standard Homepage](#)
- [Natural Standard Handbook](#)
- [Alternative Medicine Research Report](#)
- [Natural Standard Reference Book](#)
- [Natural Standard PDA](#)
- [Journal of Herbal Pharmacotherapy](#)

E-mail: news@naturalstandard.com
Phone: 617.758.4241
Web: <http://www.naturalstandard.com>

[Forward email](#)

 **SafeUnsubscribe™**

This email was sent to jen@naturalstandard.com, by news@naturalstandard.com
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Powered by



Natural Standard 617.758.4241 | 1 Broadway 14th Floor | Cambridge | MA | 02142