Sipping hot tea can cause throat cancer

PARIS: People who drink their tea piping hot run a higher risk of throat cancer than counterparts who prefer a cooler cuppa, according to an investigation published on Friday by the British Medical Journal.

Cancer of the oesophagus is linked especially to smoking and alcohol abuse but hot beverages have also been considered a risk factor, possibly because of damage to throat tissue. Interested in finding out more, Iranian researchers went to Golestan province, which has one of the highest rates of oesophageal cancer in the world.

Inhabitants there sip large quantities of hot black tea — typically drinking more than a litre per day person — but also have a low incidence of tobacco and alcohol use.

Those who drank hot tea (between 65-80°C) were twice as likely to develop throat cancer compared with those who drank warm or lukewarm tea, whose temperature was 65°C or less. Drinking very hot tea (at least 70°C) was associated with an eightfold increased risk compared with warm or lukewarm tea.

In an editorial, the Lancet said the study backed evidence that scorching fluids may cause damage to the throat’s epithelial lining and lead to cancer, although exactly how this happens remains unclear.

But it also said that there was no cause for panic, as most people tend to drink tea at a warm temperature. Previous studies in Britain have reported an average temperature preference of 56-60°C. It recommended that tea junkies wait at least four minutes before drinking from a freshly boiled cup.

Sports drinks may be tough on teeth

Though some might see sports drinks as a healthier alternative to soda, a new study shows that the citric acid they contain can damage teeth.

The finding comes from a study involving teeth from cows, New York University College of Dentistry researchers cut the teeth in half and placed them in top-selling sports drinks. After soaking for up to 90 minutes, which the researchers said simulated sipping on the drinks throughout the day, the enamel coating of the teeth was partially eaten away. This allowed the drinks to leak into the bonelike material underneath the enamel, causing the teeth to soften and weaken.

The condition, called erosive tooth wear, can result in severe tooth damage and tooth loss, if not treated. “This is the first time that the citric acid in sports drinks has been linked to erosive tooth wear,” study leader Dr. Mark Wolff, chairman of cardiology and comprehensive care at the NYU College of Dentistry, said in a news release issued by the school.

The findings were to be presented Friday at the International Association for Dental Research general sessions in Miami Beach, Fla.

Perhaps surprisingly, brushing immediately after having a sports drink might actually cause more damage, Wolff said, as the softened tooth enamel is vulnerable to the abrasiveness of toothpaste.

“To prevent tooth erosion, consume sports drinks in moderation and wait at least 30 minutes before brushing your teeth, to allow softened enamel to re-harden,” he said. “If you frequently consume sports drinks, ask your dentist if you should use an acid-neutralizing, re-mineralizing toothpaste to help re-harden soft enamel.”

Tobacco used to produce medicine

Scientists have used tobacco to produce medicine for the treatment of a number of diseases, including diabetes.

Research published in the journal BMC Biotechnology details how genetically modified tobacco plants were used to produce medicines for several autoimmune and inflammatory diseases.

Experts set out to create transgenic tobacco plants that would produce biologically-active interleukin-10 (IL-10), a potent anti-inflammatory cytokine.

They tried two different versions of IL-10 (one from a virus, one from the mouse) and generated plants in which this protein was expressed in separate compartments within the cell, to see which would work most effectively.

The researchers found tobacco plants were able to process both forms of IL-10 correctly, producing the active cytokine at high enough levels that it might be possible to use tobacco leaves without lengthy extraction and purification processes.

The authors claim they are keen to use the plants to see whether repeated small doses could help prevent type 1 diabetes mellitus (T1DM), in combination with other auto-antigens associated with the disease.

Commenting on the research, Professor Mario Pezzotti from the University of Verona, said: “Transgenic plants are attractive systems for the production of therapeutic proteins because they offer the possibility of large scale production at low cost, and they have low maintenance requirements.”

“The fact that they can be eaten, which delivers the drug where it is needed, thus avoiding lengthy purification procedures, is another plus compared with traditional drug synthesis.”

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April 26: International Seeds Day

Order 81: "Iraqi farmers shall be prohibited from re-using seeds of protected varieties."

Organizations, activists and people from various professional and linguistic backgrounds will observe April 26 as International Seeds Day (ISD) advocating for patent-free seeds, organic food and farmers’ rights. ISD will be an educational day for the public to learn about genetically modified food and its health hazardous effects and the agribusiness of major US and European companies and their monopoly over the agriculture in Africa and Asia with emphasis on India, Iraq and Afghanistan. It will be a day of solidarity with farmers in countries devastated by wars (Afghanistan, Iraq & others) and of resistance: http://www.INEAS.org.html.

Historically, the Iraqi constitution prohibited ownership of biological resources. Farmers in Iraq have operated in a mostly free-to-little-regulated, informal seed supply system. Farm-saved seeds and the free exchange of planting materials among farmers have long been the basis of agricultural practice in Iraq. Yet all of this has become history.

On April 26, 2004, Paul Bremer, the administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), issued and signed Order 81, which prohibits farmers from reusing seeds harvested from new varieties registered under the law. When ownership of a crop is claimed, seed saving will be banned and farmers will have to pay royalties to the registered, so-called seed owner.

Order 81 was signed on April 26, 2004 by Paul Bremer, the administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Iraq to control Iraq’s agriculture. The Order was a declaration of war against farmers. Article 14 of this law states “Farmers shall be prohibited from re-using seeds of protected varieties.” Order 81 mends Iraq’s original law No. 65 on patents, created in 1970.

A “Greedy law, unjust law is meant to be disobeyed” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-L1yQ27rzk

The most significant part of Order 81 is the subtitle of ‘Plant Variety Protection’ (PVP), which ensures not the protection of biodiversity, but rather the protection of the commercial interests of USA and European major seed corporations. In order to qualify for PVP, seeds have to be ‘new, distinct, uniform and stable’. Therefore, the sort of seeds being encouraged to sort are those registered under PVP. The law awarded US Corporations complete control over farmers’ seeds for 20 years. Iraqi farmers had to sign an agreement to pay a “technology fee” plus an annual license fee. Plant Variety Protection (PVP) made seed reusing and saving illegal as well as “similar” seed plantings punishable by severe fines and imprisonment. Agricultural wants the same rights everywhere, including in the USA. This will jeopardize the future of organic and independent farming.

According to Latha Jishnu, senior editor of Business Standard “Five years after Order 81 was passed, farm activists across the world have got together to mark April 26 as International Seeds Day to help Iraqi farmers to break the vice-like grip of the global seed companies. The campaign is coordinated by the Institute of Near Eastern & African Studies (IN-EAS), based in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and has got the backing of some organisations in India. I met Waafa Al-Natheema of INEAS, when she was in India earlier in the year to drum up support for the campaign, and says the world needs to respond to this threat to agriculture. Iraqi farmers, like the rest of the nation, are unaware of this law and how it could turn their world upside down. “They need our help to learn how to retain their seeds under these circumstances and how to lobby against this unjust law.”

For more information:
The Institute of Near Eastern & African Studies (INEAS)
1-3777-95-INEAS (984-6327)
INEAS@hd.com INEAS_1994@yahoo.com Full text of Order 81: http://www.trade.gov/static/iraq_ORDER.pdf
People’s rights to water and food: http://www.nawdana.org/or- ganic/index.htm
The agenda in Afghanistan & Iraq: http://www.grain.org/briefings/?id=217

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American Medical Association may investigate journal editors

CHICAGO (AP) — The American Medical Association is seeking an investigation of claims that editors of its leading medical journal threatened a whistle-blower who pointed out a researcher’s conflict of interest.

Editors of the Journal of the American Medical Association deny threatening a professor who raised concerns about a study author’s undisclosed financial link to a drug company when JAMA published the study last year. JAMA, like most leading medical journals, has a policy of noting scientists’ industry connections.

According to the Wall Street Journal, JAMA editors threatened to ban the professor from their journal and ruin his medical school’s reputation if he didn’t stop talking to reporters.

The editors deny that. But the flap prompted them to spell out what amounts to a gag order on anyone who alerts the medical journal about suspicions that a researcher has undisclosed industry ties. The journal editors argue that any suspicions should be kept secret until JAMA can complete its own probe. That is an existing policy, JAMA’s editor-in-chief, Dr. Catherine DeAngelis, told The Associated Press on Monday.

JAMA journals are independent and the medical association doesn’t interfere with what they publish. But AMA said Friday it has asked an independent oversight committee to investigate how JAMA editors handled the issue.

“As owner and publisher of JAMA, we take these concerns very seriously,” AMA board chairman Dr. Joseph Heyman said in a written statement.

The issue involves a study published in JAMA last May that said the drug Lexapro prevents depression in stroke patients. A Tennessee university professor who reads JAMA told the editors in October that he had learned that a study author had served as a speaker for Lexapro’s maker. Though other industry ties were noted in the journal, that one was not.

JAMA editors vowed to investigate. The professor, Jonathan Leu of Lincoln Memorial University, also discussed his concerns in a March 5 letter posted on a different medical journal’s website.

On March 11, JAMA editors published a correction revealing the undisclosed ties to Lexapro’s maker. JAMA’s editors acknowledged in a March 20 editorial being upset about Leo airing his concerns. They argue that publicizing unconfirmed allegations about study authors could unfairly damage reputations and interfere with JAMA’s own investigations.

Confusion Over Osteoporosis Medication and the Affect on Oral Health

It has been estimated that over 10 million Americans have Osteoporosis; a condition that causes the thinning of the bone along with severe loss of bone density over time. Medications, specifically bisphosphonate are used to treat this often debilitating disease. Although these drugs effectively slow bone loss and possibly increase bone density reducing the risk of fracture, they have recently come under fire as reports have suggested the use of medications containing bisphosphonates may cause individuals to develop “bisphosphonate-associated osteonecrosis of the jaw.”

Considered to be a rare condition osteonecrosis of the jaw results in severe damage due to the temporary or permanent loss of blood supply to the jaw bone possibly causing pain, numbness, exposed bone, tooth loss, and infection.

The American Dental Association and the National Osteoporosis Foundation have teamed-up to provide patients with a brochure titled “Osteoporosis Medications and Your Dental Health,” that will be available from dental offices this month. The goal is to separate fact from fiction by providing the brochure as a resource to patients that have become alarmed by the suggestion that their medication may be causing osteonecrosis of the jaw. In a press release Matthew Messina, D.D.S., ADA Consumer Advisor states that “Patients who take bisphosphonates for osteoporosis are encouraged to talk to their dentist so that their dentist can show them good oral hygiene practices as well as monitor their oral health,” adding stress to the point that “Patients should not stop taking their osteoporosis medications without speaking with their physicians.”