

Miracle leaves that may help protect against liver damage

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Sea buckthorn (*Hippophae rhamnoides*) berries are well known for their cholesterol busting properties, but scientists in India say that its leaves are also rich in anti-oxidants and may help ward off liver disease, according to new research due to be published in the Society of Chemical Industry's (SCI) *Journal of the Science of Food and Agriculture*.

Indigineous to the mountainous regions of China and Russia, sea buckthorn has been shown to be rich in vitamin C, vitamin E, flavonoids and essential fatty acids. The leaves are also used to make a tea.

In a clinically controlled study, scientists looked at whether the leaves had any protective effects by testing a group of rats, some of whom were given the leaf extract before being administered with a liver damage agent, carbon tetrachloride (CCI₄).

Six groups were looked at in all – group 1 was given a daily dose of saline for 5 days; group 2 received saline for 4 days and on the 5th day was given CCI₄; group 3 was given a daily dose of silymarin for 5 days followed by a single dose of CCI₄; groups 4, 5 and 6 were given 50, 100 and 200mg of sea buckthorn leaf extract respectively for five days followed by a single dose of CCI₄ on the 5th day.

The results showed that the leaf extract appeared to confer a protective mechanism on the liver – the rats given CCI₄ minus the leaf extract had sustained significant liver damage compared to the control group that did

not receive CCl₄. In comparison, liver damage was severely restricted in the rats given leaf extract at 100mg and 200mg and CCl₄.

Source: Society of Chemical Industry

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