

An age old cure

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The answer to treating painful arthritis could lie in an age old herbal remedy - frankincense, according to University research.

Scientists from the School of Biosciences have been examining the potential benefits of frankincense to help relieve and alleviate the symptoms of the condition.

"The search for new ways of relieving the symptoms of inflammatory [arthritis](#) and [osteoarthritis](#) is a long and difficult one," according to Dr. Emma Blain, who leads the research with her co-investigators Professor Vic Duance from the School of Biosciences and Dr Ahmed Ali of the Compton Group.

"The South West of England and Wales has a long standing connection

with the Somali community who have used extracts of frankincense as a traditional herbal remedy for arthritic conditions. What our research has focused on is whether and how these extracts can help relieve the [inflammation](#) that causes the pain," she added.

The Cardiff scientists believe they have been able to demonstrate that treatment with an extract of *Boswellia frereana* – a rare frankincense species – inhibits the production of key inflammatory molecules which helps prevent the breakdown of the cartilage tissue which causes the condition.

Dr. Ali adds: "The search for new drugs to alleviate the symptoms of conditions like [inflammatory arthritis](#) and osteoarthritis is a priority area for scientists. What our research has managed to achieve is to use innovative chemical extraction techniques to determine the active ingredient in frankincense.

"Having done this we are now able to further characterize the chemical entity and compare its success against other anti-inflammatory drugs used for treating the condition."

The research comes as a result of a seedcorn project, funded by the Severnside Alliance for Translational Research (SARTRE), through the MRC Developmental Pathway Funding Scheme devolved portfolio.

SARTRE is a joint project between Cardiff University and the University of Bristol to combine and accelerate translational research.

Provided by Cardiff University

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