

Cup of herbal tea could help fight breast cancer

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(Medical Xpress)—Scientists at Aston University and Russells Hall Hospital have discovered that an extract from a common plant in Pakistan may help cure breast cancer.

The plant, *Fagonia cretica*, and known as Virgon's Mantlem, is commonly used in [herbal tea](#). It has been traditionally used to treat women in rural Pakistan who have [breast cancer](#), but up until now this treatment has been regarded as something of a folklore remedy. However, patients in Pakistan who have taken the plant extract have reported that it does not appear to generate any of the serious common

side effects associated with other cancer treatments, such as loss of hair, drop in blood count or diarrhoea.

Now, scientists at Aston University in Birmingham and Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley have undertaken tests of the plant extract and proved that it kills [cancer cells](#) without damage to normal [breast cells](#) in laboratory conditions.

Professor Helen Griffith and Professor Amutul R Carmichael who lead the study are now aiming to identify which element or elements of the plant are responsible for killing the cancer cells with a view to eventually begin trials with human cancer patients.

Professor Helen Griffith of Aston University said; "More research is needed to establish the role of the extract in cancer management and It now needs to be demonstrated that this extract is as effective in killing cancer cells inside the body as it is within laboratory. The next steps are to identify which element of the plant is responsible for killing the cancer cells with a view to eventually begin trials with human cancer patients."

Dr Caitlin Palframan, policy manager at Breakthrough Breast Cancer said; "Some of the most important cancer-fighting drugs are originally derived from plants. As this research is at the very earliest stage we won't know for quite some time whether drugs derived from this plant will be effective in treating breast cancer but we look forward to seeing any progress."

More information: *PLoS ONE* 7(6): e40152.
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Provided by Aston University

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