

Australian hopes for wine with more health benefits

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A waiter serves glasses of red wine at the counter of a bar in Paris on December 2, 2011. The health properties of red wine have long been debated but an Australian biochemist believes he has created a drop so loaded with antioxidants that it could treat a range of ills.

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Brisbane-based Greg Jardine said he has patented a group of compounds created during the wine-making process which he says act as an anti-inflammatory and could help battle conditions such as arthritis and [chronic fatigue](#).

While previous studies have suggested a small daily intake of wine could help men live longer and may protect against heart disease, they have always been countered by those pointing out the dangers of [alcohol consumption](#).

Jardine, however, believes he has created a palatable drink which could have discernible health-boosting effects.

"We take this antioxidant, which exists in tiny amounts in wine, to a level where it can actually do something," he told AFP on Tuesday.

Jardine said loading up wine with [antioxidants](#) usually made it too tannic and undrinkable, but by also making the antioxidants more fat-soluble, and more easily absorbed by the body, they surprisingly also became more palatable.

"So it's a [double whammy](#)," he said.

His wine was created using normal wine-making processes, he said, but steps were taken to enhance some processes which ordinarily take place at a much less intense level.

"We haven't done anything outside of wine making, our bottle of super dry is purely a [red wine](#)," he said.

Jardine said he hoped the Modified [Polyphenol](#) Technology could also be used in other foods and drinks, saying they could probably also make beer or candy with the hoped-for [health benefits](#).

Pharmacologist Lindsay Brown, who has tested Jardine's compounds at the University of Southern Queensland, said it appeared to be effective in improving the health of rats crippled with arthritis.

"It's totally preventing the inflammation, and the swelling and the stiffness of the leg," he said of the compounds, which were tested in early 2012 once they were removed from the wine for the purpose of the research.

But he said there were potential problems with taking any wine for medicinal purposes.

"Wine is clearly a beverage that a significant proportion of the population will take, the problem of course is that you are not saying to people to drink a whole bottle of the stuff every day," he said.

Previous research has suggested that drinking up to half a glass of wine each day can help men live up to five years longer, while another study found it lowered the risk of heart disease.

However, the World Health Organisation says the harmful use of alcohol results in 2.5 million deaths each year and it is the world's third largest risk factor for premature mortality, disability and loss of health.

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