

Team discovers organic compounds to improve heart health, small vessel disease

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The University of South Florida team discovered the compounds while researching grape seeds. Credit: University of South Florida

University of South Florida scientists have identified a group of compounds with the potential for beneficial effects on the cardiovascular system and small vessel disease while researching grape seed extracts discovered at USF. This novel and patented technology was exclusively licensed from USF to Phoinix Holdings, LLC, to

commercialize a variety of new products in the cosmetic, wound care, medical device, pharmaceutical, nutraceutical, food, beverage and animal industries.

The grape seed extracts were investigated by David Fitzpatrick, Ph.D., retired professor in Molecular Pharmacology and Physiology, Morsani College of Medicine, USF Health, and Rebecca O'Malley, Ph.D., retired professor emeritus in Chemistry, College of Arts and Sciences at USF, while examining the so-called French paradox, an epidemiological finding that the French enjoy a [high fat diet](#) without suffering from high incidence of heart disease. Fitzpatrick believed that the link was related to the consumption of red wine, and after years of research, they discovered of a group of compounds known as galloylated epicatechins, which can be extracted from various natural sources.

While examining these compounds, Fitzpatrick and O'Malley were able to demonstrate the effects they had on the [cardiovascular system](#) by stimulating the relaxation of [blood vessels](#) when the compounds were administered in a laboratory model.

"We are excited to partner with Phoinix to develop novel, patented dietary supplements containing galloylated procyanidins," said Donna Herber, senior licensing manager at USF. "These [compounds](#) have been scientifically shown to induce relaxation in blood vessels. Unlike other extracts on the market, Phoinix's products will have unique ingredients with unique [biological effects](#)."

"This new technology will transform the future of human and animal health, and has the ability to make existing products on the market work more efficiently and effectively," said J.R. Huddleston, co-founder of Phoinix Holdings, LLC.

Phoinix seeks to utilize the biological effects of these extracts through a

variety of product offerings. The company has received seed funding through the USF Research Foundation Seed Capital program.

Provided by University of South Florida

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