

Herbal antioxidants are becoming increasingly important

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The human body is constantly exposed to so-called free radicals, which are a burden on the body. If they get out of hand, the result is oxidative stress, which can promote disease. While this has been treated in the past with the help of antioxidant vitamins and minerals, scientists are now increasingly turning to the use of phytochemicals, representing plant

secondary metabolites. This has resulted in an analysis of almost 300,000 scientific papers by a team led by the molecular biologist Atanas G. Atanasov from the University of Vienna. The results have recently been published in the journal *Oxidative Medicine and Cellular Longevity*.

Due to the [natural progression](#) of aging, biological oxidative processes are increasing, which is associated with a variety of inflammation-linked diseases such as autoimmune diseases, diabetes or cancer. Using natural and synthetic antioxidants is an attempt to prevent these processes and at the same time protect from the development of inflammatory-linked diseases.

In a recent study, a research team led by the molecular biologist Atanas G. Atanasov from the Department of Pharmacognosy at the University of Vienna has analyzed [scientific literature](#) focusing on antioxidants and found that the focus of scientific attention has shifted sharply in recent years. While the focus prior to 2000 was on [antioxidant vitamins](#) and minerals, more recent studies are increasingly focusing on the effects of phytochemicals such as curcumin from turmeric or resveratrol from red wine.

"The reason for this transition could be that [clinical trials](#) with many antioxidant vitamins and minerals had disappointing results and the expected health benefits have not been achieved," says Atanasov. While vitamins and minerals are still often used in medical practice, scientists meanwhile devote increasing attention on the use of so-called phytochemicals. "These are contained in many foods with proven health benefits, including fresh fruits and vegetables. In a next step, we want to better understand the effects of these molecules in order to be able to apply them in a targeted way for the prevention and treatment of diverse diseases," concludes Atanasov.

More information: Andy Wai Kan Yeung et al. Antioxidants:

Scientific Literature Landscape Analysis, *Oxidative Medicine and Cellular Longevity* (2019). [DOI: 10.1155/2019/8278454](https://doi.org/10.1155/2019/8278454)

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