



SCIENCE The potentially magic health benefits lurking in a humble curry spice

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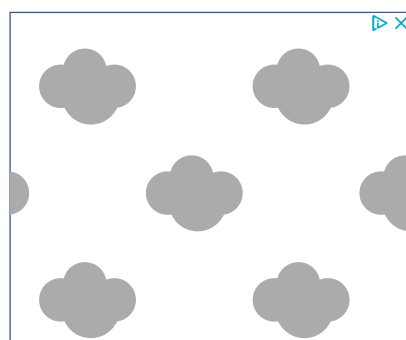
Words by Holly McHugh | Staff Writer

For all you curry lovers out there – and curry is our nation’s favourite cuisine – good news! Turmeric, the brightly coloured spice found in curry powder, boasts an enormous array of health benefits, including newly discovered improvements to memory and mood. So slap on the seconds!

Turmeric has pretty special properties because it contains the substance Curcumin, which gives this spice its vibrant yellow colour. The natural healing ability of this substance is due to its incredible anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties. Many degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s are associated with oxidative processes and numerous inflammatory diseases arise due to chronic inflammation.

The potential for this powerful little spice to help combat such conditions is subject to ongoing research, but many believe it is remarkably effective.

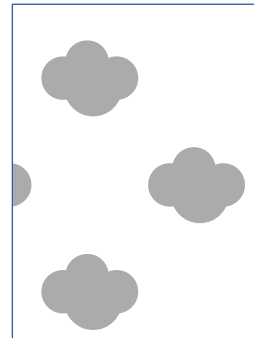
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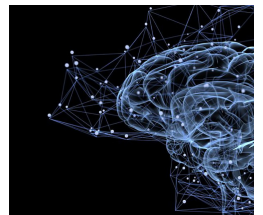
A new study published in the American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry has found that consumption of Curcumin may contribute to improvements in memory and mood, as its anti-inflammatory properties may protect the brain from degenerating. The double-blind, placebo-controlled study involved 40 participants between the ages of 50 and 90 who had reported mild, age-related memory loss, but did not have dementia. Participants were randomly given either a placebo or 90mg of Curcumin, twice daily over an 18 month period.

Cognitive assessments were carried out on all participants at the start of the study and at six-month

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microscopic plaques and tangles in the brain - thought to be associated with Alzheimer's.



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The results indicated that those taking Curcumin improved memory function by 28%. Brain PET scans performed pre- and post-treatment suggested that mood and memory improvements were due to decreases in plaque and tangle accumulation in the Amygdala and Hypothalamus – regions of the brain associated with emotions, memory and decision making.

Perhaps not coincidentally, the prevalence of diseases such as Alzheimer's in elderly citizens in India is far lower than other areas in the world. Studies have indicated that there is a link between regular consumption of curcumin in the diet and better cognitive performance in people living in India where Turmeric is a staple part of their diet.

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So maybe curries aren't as bad for you as you may think! That said, ordering yourself take-out curries every week is unlikely to dramatically reduce your risk of Alzheimer's, as concentrations of curcumin are likely to be minimal and a far cry from a traditional, authentic Indian.

Nonetheless, we should increase our intake of Turmeric. It has already taken off as one of the new and "trendy" superfoods, slowly making more regular appearances in our food and adding a little pizzazz: Turmeric Lattes are now a healthy alternative to your standard cup of coffee; whilst your standard scrambled eggs on toast are now glowing orange with the addition of the magic Turmeric powder.

Resource://doi.org/10.1016/j.jagp.2017.10.010

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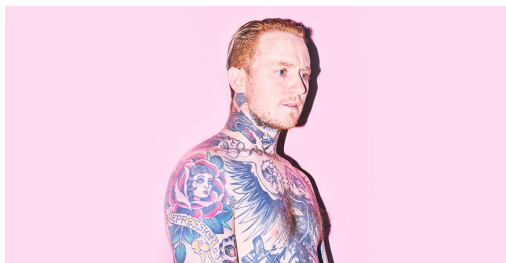
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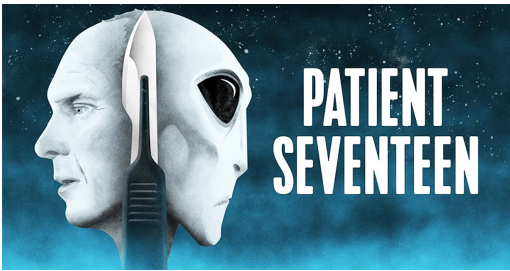
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