

UWO scientists delve into juicy research topic

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University of Wisconsin Oshkosh scientists are exploring potential new health benefits of cranberry and grape juices.

UW Oshkosh chemist Brant Kedrowski and virologist Teri Shors recently received a \$22,000 UW System Applied Research grant for “Exploration of Bioactive Compounds from Wisconsin Cranberries and Grapes for Antiviral Nutraceutical Potential.”

“Very little research is being done on antiviral activity of cranberries. Most research has been on the antioxidant activities and antibacterial activities for fighting urinary tract infections caused by bacteria,” Shors said. “We are venturing into some unexplored territory. There is always a need for more antivirals.”

The project builds on recent research findings at UW Oshkosh that demonstrated the antiviral activity of commercial cranberry and grape juices. The researchers plan to isolate purified cranberry and grape extracts and identify the chemical compounds that are the source of the antiviral activity.

“Dr. Kedrowski is overseeing the chemistry aspect of this project, including isolating compounds from the cranberries using various solvents and a procedure called column chromatography,” Shors explained. “I am overseeing the biology aspect: testing chemical extracts for antiviral activity.”

Scientific evidence suggests that cranberry components have anticancer benefits in addition to their antioxidant properties. Grapes, wine and grape extracts are associated with a number of health benefits, such as lowering high blood pressure and cholesterol and reducing heart disease.

“There is the potential in our research to discover a compound or combination of compounds to treat various viral infections from poxvirus to influenza to herpes virus infections,” Shors said.