

NEW EVIDENCE HIGHLIGHTS THE POTENTIAL POWER OF POMEGRANATES



Fruits and vegetables contain a wide range of important nutrients, but it is less well known that they are also rich in polyphenols. Indeed, a recent survey of more than 2,000 European healthcare professionals revealed two-thirds were unclear that 100% fruit juices delivered carotenoids and polyphenols.¹ Citrus fruits and their juices contain the polyphenols hesperidin, naringin and narirutin, while apples and their juices provide catechins, quercetin and rutin; and pomegranate juice has a high content of ellagic acid.

A newly published review paper² has focused on pomegranate (*Punica granatum L.*) and confirmed that the polyphenol-rich juice and extracts from different parts of the plant may exert health benefits as reported by *in vitro* and *in vivo* studies.

As the authors noted: "The antidiabetic, antihypertensive, antimicrobial and anti-tumour effects of pomegranate fruit are of particular scientific and clinical interest." For example, a meta-analysis quoted in the review revealed a statistically significant and clinically relevant reduction in systolic (-4.96 mmHg) and diastolic (-2.01 mmHg) blood pressure following consumption of pomegranate juice.³ While the review suggested a potential of pomegranate in lowering risk of chronic conditions, the authors called for further work to clarify the mechanisms of action relating to the bioactive ingredients.

Other studies have investigated mechanisms of action for a range of polyphenols from other fruits and vegetables on cardio-protective pathways, including improved endothelial function, inhibition of platelet aggregation, improved blood lipid profile, antihypertensive and anti-inflammatory properties, and increased insulin sensitivity.^{4,5} However, despite mounting evidence, including for hesperidin in citrus fruit, there are no permitted EU claims at present for fruit polyphenols.

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