

Scientists closer to harnessing red wine benefits

By Denise Roland, Wall Street Journal

Scientists on opposite sides of the globe appear to be getting closer to harnessing one of red wine's most elusive health-giving ingredients and putting it into a pill.

The ingredient, resveratrol, has been touted for years for its ostensible powers to prolong life and protect against a range of ailments including heart disease, diabetes and Alzheimer's disease. Studies pointing to those benefits have been performed in laboratories on yeast, worms, fruit flies and mice, among other organisms.

Testing those benefits in humans has proved more complex. Resveratrol occurs naturally in red wine at such low concentrations, and in combination with so many other substances, that studying its health benefits among wine drinkers isn't practical. And purified resveratrol is broken down in the liver so quickly that it must be given at very high concentrations to prove effective.

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