

USA: Five botanical research centres announced

Studies of the safety, effectiveness, and biological action of botanical products are major focuses for the five dietary supplement research centres selected to be jointly funded by the Office of Dietary Supplements (ODS) and the National Centre for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM), two components of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The NIH's National Cancer Institute is co-supporting two of the five centres.

The competitive awards, approximately \$1.5 million each per year for five years, were made to Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Baton Rouge, L.A.; University of Illinois at Chicago; University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; University of Missouri, Columbia; and Wake Forest University Health Sciences, Winston-Salem, N.C.

These five interdisciplinary and collaborative dietary supplement centres will focus on how botanicals may affect human health. *"Eventually, the program may provide data that translates to new ways to reduce disease risk,"* explained Paul M. Coates, Ph.D., director of ODS. *"Until then, the research from these centers will help the public make informed decisions about botanical dietary supplements."*

The 2007 National Health Interview Survey showed that about 18% of adults reported taking a non-vitamin, non-mineral, natural product, spending about \$15 billion on the purchase of these products which contain a dietary ingredient intended to supplement the diet other than vitamins and minerals, such as single herbs or mixtures. Botanical products, including supplements, are among the most popular and use appears to be on the rise.

Source: AHPA