Balancing Fats may Benefit Prostate Cancer

(Ivanhoe Newswire) -- Achieving a better balance between fats found in corn and other oils and fats found in cold water fish may be a good way to reduce the growth of prostate cancer tumors and lower PSA levels in men.

Researchers arrived at those conclusions after conducting a study in mice who were bred to have a hormone-sensitive form of prostate cancer similar to that seen in humans. All of the mice were fed a diet containing 20 percent fat. Some received equal portions of omega-6 fatty acids, such as the type found in corn oil, and omega-3 fatty acids, which are found in salmon, tuna and other types of cold water fish. Others received a typical American diet, which is mainly made up of omega-6 fatty acids.

Results showed a 22-percent reduction in tumor cell growth rates among the mice fed the balanced fat diet. PSA levels -- a marker of prostate cancer activity -- were 77-percent lower in that group. The balanced fat diet probably works, report the investigators, because omega-3 fatty acids contain substances known to play a role in reducing the inflammation associated with the growth of cancerous tumors of the prostate.

"Corn oil is the backbone of the American diet. We consume up to 20-times more omega-6 fatty acids in our diet compared to omega-3 acids," says study author William Aronson, M.D., a professor in the department of urology at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA and a researcher with UCLA's Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center. "This study strongly suggests that eating a healthier ratio of these two types of fatty acids may make a difference in reducing prostate cancer growth."

He cautions, however, more studies are needed to prove the strategy would have any benefit in people.

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SOURCE: Clinical Cancer Research, published online Aug. 1, 2006