

Presentations from the Second International Conference on Phytoestrogens Little Rock, Arkansas October 17–20, 1993

Preface (43824A)

The effects of phytoestrogens on human reproduction were known by the early Greeks and Egyptians who used plant preparations as fertility and postpartum agents. In the last 50 years, plant estrogens have emerged as a factor in human economic and health issues. As concern over the effects on human health of estrogenic chemicals in the environment continues to mount, more attention will be focused on those estrogenic compounds found naturally in plants.

In November 1990, the First International Conference on Phytoestrogens, sponsored and organized by the National Center for Toxicological Research (NCTR)/Food and Drug Administration (FDA) was held in Little Rock, Arkansas. The conference was attended by nine investigators representing two countries. The program was aimed at determining the status of research on phytoestrogens and identifying research needs. This was the first opportunity for investigators concerned with phytoestrogens to compare resources, assess problems and research approaches, and present data. The conference confirmed a critical need for the continued development of methods to detect and measure physiological levels of phytoestrogens in animals and humans. The meeting participants established several collaborative studies between investigators at different institutions and agreed to meet again in the near future to discuss the progress of these studies.

The Second International Conference on Phytoestrogens on October 17–20, 1993, was also sponsored by the NCTR/FDA and held in Little Rock. Forty-two scientists representing six countries attended this conference. The discussions centered on the following topics:

- *In vivo* biochemical and morphological responses
- Alterations in brain morphology
- Preventive and therapeutic uses in neoplasia
- Methods for analytical detection
- Future of phytoestrogen research

An open discussion demonstrated the need for the FDA to keep abreast of relevant findings from phytoestrogen research and to pursue an active role in conducting research in this area. The FDA requires a substantial data base from which to make regulatory decisions. The determination of the risks and benefits of human phytoestrogen exposure must be addressed for both dietary exposure and potential pharmaceutical treatments.

This symposium issue of *Proceedings of the Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine* contains presentations from the Second International Conference on Phytoestrogens.

The participants expressed a great deal of interest in this conference becoming a biennial event. The next conference is tentatively scheduled for November 1995, and the NCTR/FDA will again assume a leadership role in organizing and sponsoring the meeting. The feeling of the group was that phytoestrogen research is rapidly expanding and will receive more attention in the public sector with respect to the impact of dietary estrogens on health of both humans and animals.

Two resource centers were established to provide (i) sources of phytoestrogens and (ii) a phytoestrogen bibliography. Investigators needing phytoestrogens can contact Dr. Ken Setchell, Children's Hospital Medical Center, Cincinnati, Ohio 45229. Instructions for obtaining the phytoestrogen bibliography through Internet are found in the following announcement.

We thank Loetta Bradford and Diann Smith for their invaluable aid in the logistics of the conference and in handling the large volume of correspondence generated as a result of this publication. Special thanks go to the members of the review panel (Dr. Michael E. Baker, Dr. Cynthia Burroughs, Dr. Adrian Franks, Dr. Claude Hughes, Jr., and Dr. Patricia Whitten) for their timely and constructive comments on the manuscripts.

Announcement

The increasing interest in the effects of nontraditional estrogens on humans and wildlife has been reflected in the number of recent meetings devoted to this topic. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has been active in phytoestrogen research for some years, and through its National Center for Toxicological Research (NCTR) has sponsored the first two meetings devoted entirely to this topic. The first of these meetings was held in November 1989. One outcome was an agreement that the NCTR/FDA would assemble a bibliography of phytoestrogen publications. This bibliography contains over 900 entries and is now available to interested investigators worldwide.

The phytoestrogen bibliography is available on the Internet via ftp, gopher, and Mosaic. Gopher and Mosaic are preferred, since they are easy to use, but ftp is available for those who want or need it. The following instructions assume some familiarity with gopher, Mosaic, or ftp. If you are not familiar with the use of these packages, please consult your local system administrator or help desk for assistance.

Gopher

The NCTR gopher can be reached from the original gopher at the University of Minnesota directly. Gopher menus differ from site to site, but the Minnesota gopher is usually the first menu you see or is easily accessible from your first menu. Once at Minnesota, the following sequence of menu selections will get you to NCTR:

- Other Gopher and Information Servers
- North America
- USA
- Arkansas
- National Center for Toxicological Research

Once at NCTR gopher, choose the following menu items to see the Phytoestrogen Bibliography:

- Phytoestrogens
- Phytoestrogen Bibliography

If you are familiar with specifying gopher addresses to your gopher software, you can reach the NCTR gopher directly by linking to "gopher.ncnr.fda.gov, port 70." This will give you the NCTR main menu.

Mosaic (and Other World Wide Web Clients)

Since Mosaic can access gopher servers, the instructions for gopher also apply to Mosaic. From Mosaic, the Minnesota gopher can be reached by selecting first "Starting Points for Internet Exploration" from the NCSA Mosaic Home Page, and then "Original (UMN) Gopher."

Alternatively, you can go directly to the NCTR gopher by specifying the following URL: "gopher://gopher.ncnr.fda.gov./1."

Ftp

Use ftp to connect to "ftp.ncnr.fda.gov", and log in as anonymous. No password is required. You will have read-only access to the bibliographic database, and to the other files available on the NCTR gopher. Download the file "biblio.doc" using the "get" command in ASCII mode.

If you want to edit, correct, or add new listings to the data base, whether it is one of your publications or one by other investigators, either fax us the information ([501] 543-7682) or send it via e-mail (KMEDLOCK@FDANT.NCTR.FDA.GOV). We will then enter the information as appropriate. Such an interactive collaborative effort will provide each of us with facile access to all of the literature in this rapidly developing area. Thanks for your cooperation, and I hope this bibliography will be of use to you.

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