

Teen Suicide Prevention Week

11 - 18 February 2019

Teen suicide is in the spotlight in South Africa this week. The South Africa Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) run the national toll-free suicide crisis helpline which handles an alarming number of calls from teens who are calling for themselves or on behalf of a friend. This suicide call centre has already saved hundreds of lives. During Teen Suicide Prevention week SADAG will be raising awareness through school talks, online content, Facebook Friday online chats and so much more. This awareness not only encourages teens to come forward but also tells them where to go for help in their own community and how to contact the suicide call centre.

Skilled counsellors support the helpline and encourage teens to get professional help. To join the chats, like SADAG's Facebook page: The South African Depression and Anxiety Group or go to www.sadag.org. Facebook users that would like to remain anonymous can send an email to media@anxiety.org.za and SADAG will ask on their behalf.



GIVE YOUR ♥ ROOIBOS

During Valentine's Month, while matters of the heart are on the forefront, it was announced that Rooibos could potentially curb heart disease.

Cardiologists from all over the world could soon be prescribing Rooibos as part of the therapeutic approach to tackle cardiovascular disease (CVD) – a modern-day epidemic that annually claims 8.76 million lives worldwide.

So says professor Amanda Swart from the Biochemistry Department at Stellenbosch University following an in-depth examination of peer-reviewed studies spanning the last two decades that were conducted on the therapeutic potential of Rooibos in the context of heart disease.

"To date, remedial therapy has been largely ineffective, which is evidenced by the growing incidence of CVD globally. In South Africa, this condition remains the second largest cause of death after HIV/AIDS, with 56,284 people dying from heart disease every year according to the Heart and Stroke Foundation SA (HSF).

"Globally, there is a major shift toward the use of preventative and complementary supplements to promote well-being and help curb the progression of heart disease, which also coincides with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) 'Traditional Medicine Strategy', where traditional medicines are being prioritised for the improvement of health. This holds tremendous possibilities not only for patients, but for the Rooibos sector and SA too, as the herb is exclusively farmed in the Western Cape.

"Given the overwhelming body of evidence that exist, Rooibos' potential, in both alleviating CVD in sufferers and lowering the risk of developing heart disease, is irrefutable," remarked Prof Swart.

The beneficial effects of Rooibos are largely attributed to the complex mix of antioxidant compounds in Rooibos. Currently 59 of these compounds have been identified of which aspalathin is one of the most abundant and also unique to Rooibos.

CVD goes hand-in-hand with chronic inflammation and its Rooibos' ability to counter inflammation in the body, that makes it so powerful. Based on the studies undertaken in humans and rats, Rooibos offers the following cardio-protective benefits:

1. Antioxidants protect against cell damage, thereby reducing inflammation.
2. It has the potential to lower pro-inflammatory responses and stimulate anti-inflammatory responses.
3. Certain laboratory studies have shown a significant reduction in "bad" LDL- cholesterol levels, while increasing "good" HDL-cholesterol.
4. Suppresses the angiotensin-converting enzyme (ACE), which is responsible for increasing blood pressure.
5. Reduces cortisol production thus counteracting chronic stress and anxiety. As contributing factors to CVD, stress, anxiety and depression may heighten the risk of heart disease.
6. Decreases blood glucose levels and increases glucose uptake into heart muscle cells.

Prof Swart said: "Future research related to Rooibos should progress to clinical trial phase in earnest, especially since studies suggest that CVD sufferers who regularly drink Rooibos tea, may require altered doses of prescribed medicine."

Research director for the SA Rooibos Council (SARC), Joe Swart said: "A significant amount of funds are invested annually to investigate the health and medicinal benefits of Rooibos."

To get the most from Rooibos, Prof Swart advises drinking it as a tea, which will supply a constant stream of antioxidants, while keeping one sufficiently hydrated.

For more info on Rooibos' benefits or heart-healthy Rooibos recipes, visit www.sarooibos.co.za.

*** The editor of Platinum Publishers suggests trying a teaspoon of honey with your Rooibos Tea, rather than sugar.**

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