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Media Statement

VOLUNTERS NEEDED TO TRIAL LOCAL SUPER-FOOD

On the back of the newest findings that a novel, locally-produced bread could help lower blood pressure, West Australian scientists are calling for volunteers to help uncover its potential in managing diabetes.

Researchers at the Western Australian Institute for Medical Research (WAIMR's) Centre for Food and Genomic Medicine (CFGM) have revealed that lupin-flour bread can help people who are overweight or obese lower their blood pressure and reduce health risks of elevated blood pressure.

University of Western Australia (UWA) Dr Jonathan Hodgson said the research, published online in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* on January 14, asked men and women who were overweight and obese to substitute a portion of their daily energy intake with lupin bread.

"We found that on average, people who ate about four slices of lupin bread each day had a lower blood pressure and pulse pressure than those in the control group who ate white bread," Dr Hodgson said.

"At the end of the trial, the group eating lupin bread had a difference of three millimetres of mercury less systolic blood pressure and 3.5 millimetres of mercury less pulse pressure – which means that just a simple dietary change helped them reduce their risk of hypertension, coronary artery disease and stroke.

"While lupin bread may not be the silver bullet, this research shows us that a very easy dietary change can go a long way to helping lower blood pressure, improve wellbeing and steer clear of life-threatening conditions."

Continuing their investigations into the novel food, the team is now urging people with type 2 diabetes to step forward and join a month-long trial to determine whether it can help manage the condition.

UWA researcher Dr Emma Dove said the benefits of lupin bread had already been demonstrated in relation to obesity, and this new trial would be the first to look at its impact on diabetes.

"We have already shown in other clinical trials that lupin bread can help to curb hunger, so this trial will take our research a step further and look at the effects it could have on levelling blood glucose levels," she said.

"We're asking anyone between the 35 and 65 years of age who has been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes in the last 10 years to help us out with this simple trial.

"Our volunteers will be asked to consume four drinks during the month – much like a shake or smoothie – and we will monitor their blood glucose levels and appetite hormones that follow."

Participants will each consume a lupin-based drink, a soy-based drink and two glucose-based drinks across the month, to determine the varying effects on blood glucose levels and appetite.

"What generally happens after a person eats or drinks is their blood glucose level rises, so what we are trying to pinpoint is whether lupins could help stabilise those levels to avoid a spike and help people manage type 2 diabetes more effectively," Dr Dove said.

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“With Type 2 diabetes Australia’s fastest growing chronic disease, we’re hoping the results lead to an easy and effective way to assist in managing this debilitating disease.”

In 2007, the CFGM team showed lupin bread could help people reduce their meal sizes and curb hunger, and ‘Slimmers Choice’ a lupin-based bread developed by Fremantle’s Bodhi’s Bakehouse in conjunction with UWA’s School of Medicine, was put on supermarket shelves.

More novel foods including lupin-based biscuits and pasta are expected to hit supermarket shelves in the coming year.

WA produces 80 per cent of the world’s supply of Australian sweet lupins.

To find out more about the latest study or to take part, please contact the CFGM on (08) 9224 0341.

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