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Grape juice can reduce memory loss, study suggests

Drinking purple grape juice can reduce or even reverse memory loss, a study suggests.

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Scientists from the University of Cincinnati's psychiatry department carried out a study which involved 12 people with early memory loss drinking pure 100 per cent Concord grape juice for 12 weeks.

During the trial participants were split into two groups, one which drank juice and one which didn't.

Both groups' memories were regularly tested in the form of learning lists and items placed in a certain order.

The results showed an improvement the longer the trial went on in the half of the group who were drinking the juice, which is made from grapes grown in the Concord region of New Hampshire, USA.

Experts believe this proves the brain-boosting powers of antioxidants contained in the skin and juice of the grapes.

Dr Robert Krikorian of the university presented the results of his study at the International Polyphenols and Health conference in Harrogate, Yorks, on Tuesday.

He said: "While there were no significant differences between the groups at baseline, following the treatment, those drinking Concord grape juice demonstrated a significant improvement in list learning.

"And trends suggested improved short-term memory retention and spatial, non-verbal memory.

"The results involving Concord grape juice are very encouraging and certainly warrant an additional study.

"A simple, easy-to-incorporate dietary intervention that could improve or protect memory function, such as drinking Concord grape juice, may be beneficial for the ageing population."

The study gives further weight to the suggestion that the consumption of antioxidant-rich foods and beverages, such as fruits and vegetables, and their 100 per cent juices may help preserve cognitive function and slow or reverse memory decline in certain populations.

Dr Krikorian led the study, which was carried out earlier this year, as part of ongoing research into the link between fruit and vegetables and the prevention of mental decline.

His trial involved a dozen older adults between the ages of 75 and 80 already suffering from early memory loss.

Each participant drank 100 per cent Concord grape juice or a placebo for almost three months, during which time they were followed for measures of memory function including both verbal and non-verbal tasks.

A 2006 US study conducted at Vanderbilt University revealed drinking fruit and vegetable juices frequently could significantly cut the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease.

US researchers followed almost 2,000 people for up to 10 years – providing a powerful set of results.

They found the risk was 76 per cent lower for those who drank juice more than three times a week, compared with those who drank it less than once-a-week.

Alzheimer's is linked to the accumulation of clumps of beta-amyloid protein in the brain.

There is a suggestion this process may be controlled by the chemical hydrogen peroxide.