

Unique Mushroom Extract AHCC® Shows Promise For Lyme Disease

(NAPSA)—Once almost unheard of, Lyme disease is now a household word. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates there are 20,000 new cases a year, and 10 percent of Americans say they know someone with chronic Lyme disease.

Yet the illness is tricky to diagnose. In the early phases, Lyme disease causes symptoms that can easily be mistaken for a case of the flu. And while some people see a distinctive bull's-eye-shaped rash, not everyone does, and the rash doesn't always look the same. As a result, it can take weeks or even months to get a correct diagnosis.

Worse yet, as time elapses, the bacterium that causes the disease becomes much harder to eradicate—making it more difficult to treat it effectively. Fortunately, a new pilot study shows that AHCC, a proprietary medicinal mushroom extract developed in Japan, can help alleviate the symptoms of both early and chronic Lyme disease.

Lyme disease: A hidden time bomb

Spread by black-legged ticks, Lyme disease initially causes symptoms such as rash, headaches, fatigue, fever, muscle aches, and joint pain. Timely treatment with antibiotics can be effective, but if the disease is not caught and treated early, more serious symptoms such as short-term memory loss and heart palpitations can emerge, as the bacterium spreads to the brain and heart.

Although early-detected Lyme disease can be treated with antibiotics lasting 14 to 21 days, untreated chronic Lyme disease can continue for weeks, months, or even years after the tick bite. Those who have reached the chronic stage of Lyme disease run the risk of symptoms worsening and becoming long-term—causing emotional and physical stress.

AHCC: a potent immune system modulator

AHCC is an extract of the mycelia (root systems) of medicinal mushrooms



Doctors are looking into a new way to treat Lyme disease.

and the best-selling immune supplement in Japan. It has been shown to modulate the body's immune system in more than 20 human clinical studies and is used in more than 1,000 health care facilities around the world.

Rather than being directly antibacterial, AHCC increases the numbers and/or activity of several kinds of immune cells such as natural killer cells, T cells, and dendritic cells, as well as cytokines, the chemical messengers of the immune system.

Thanks to this ability to dial up immune response, AHCC has been shown to help prevent or treat a variety of bacterial and viral diseases such as HPV and hepatitis C in humans, and MRSA, influenza, and West Nile in animals. That impressive track record inspired a group of scientists to study how taking AHCC would affect Lyme disease patients.

Lead researcher says study results are "a truly exciting finding"

The study, conducted at The Salerno Center for Complementary Medicine in New York by Dr. John Salerno, enrolled 12 patients with a definitive diagnosis of early or chronic Lyme disease.

The participants took three grams of AHCC per day for eight weeks. At the beginning of the study, after four weeks, and again after eight weeks, Salerno and his associates measured symptoms such as rash, flulike symptoms, lymph node swelling, neck stiffness, and issues

with the eyes, joints, and muscles, as well as neurological and cardiovascular symptoms. In addition, they looked for evidence of the bacterium and examined markers of immune activity.

After eight weeks, AHCC had improved the following symptoms: flulike symptoms; eye, joint, and muscle problems; and neurological and cardiovascular issues. Of the three patients who tested positive for IgM antibodies (produced by the body at the beginning of a Lyme disease infection) at the beginning of the study, none still had the antibodies at the conclusion. Of particular note, AHCC also significantly decreased inflammation.

"Inflammation is what makes Lyme disease so debilitating," Salerno commented. "The fact that AHCC could reduce inflammation and improve Lyme symptoms is a truly exciting finding."

AHCC may offer protection against Lyme disease infection

It is possible that taking AHCC proactively could prevent Lyme disease infection in the first place. A weak immune system makes the body more vulnerable to any kind of infection, whether from a virus, parasite, or bacterium. The stronger your immune system, the more likely it is to either prevent infection in the first place or clear an established infection more quickly.

In the case of Lyme disease, giving the immune system an assist in the form of more immune cells—and more active immune cells—could mean the difference between the infection being eliminated by the body in the early stages or developing into chronic Lyme disease, with its more serious symptoms. And as the new study demonstrated, even for those with chronic Lyme, AHCC can help mitigate debilitating symptoms through reducing inflammation, offering new hope for those who often feel hopeless.

For more information about AHCC or this study, visit www.ahccresearch.org.