

Bastyr Receives Grants from NIH for Echinacea, AIDS Studies

Editorial Staff

Since its inception in 1978, Bastyr University has conducted more than 40 studies on herbal remedies, homeopathic formulas and other forms of alternative care. In keeping with its reputation as a leader in complementary and alternative medicine research in the U.S., the Bastyr University Research Institute has received funding in the form of two grants from the National Institutes of Health to study the effects of echinacea in children and analyze data from previous CAM studies on HIV and AIDS.

The first grant of \$375,000 will allow the Institute to complete data analysis of two studies first conducted by Bastyr's AIDS Research Center in 1995. One study, the Alternative Medical Care Outcomes in AIDS (AMCOA) study, observed 1,689 HIV-positive patients and their use of CAM therapies in combating HIV. The other study, conducted in collaboration with Johns Hopkins University, examined outcomes associated with CAM use in patients enrolled in the Multicenter AIDS Cohort Study (MACS), a 14-year study of HIV-positive men.

The two-year grant will allow Bastyr to complete data analysis and publish the results of the AMCOA and MACS studies. Leanna J. Standish, ND, PhD, LAc, the Institute's director, has been named principal investigator; Carlo Calabrese, ND, MPH will be co-investigator. The University of Washington Center for AIDS and STD Research has also signed on to help the Institute complete the data analysis.

The second grant will be used by Bastyr and the University of Washington to conduct a two-year trial study on the effectiveness of echinacea in treating upper respiratory infections in children. The double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial, believed to be one of the first of its kind in the country, will involve 600 children aged 2-11. Half of the children will take echinacea for any colds suffered during a four-month period; the rest will be given a placebo.

The study will attempt to determine whether echinacea actually shortens the duration of cold symptoms and/or lessens the severity of upper respiratory infections in children. The researchers will also try to determine if echinacea can reduce the rate of secondary infections, and whether it causes any significant side-effects.

Dr. James Taylor of the University of Washington Child Health Institute will be the study's principal investigator; Drs. Standish and Calabrese will be co-investigators in the project. Both Bastyr and UW have already begun their investigations in the echinacea study; however, interested parties can contact the Research Institute by phone at (206) 834-4137 or online at www.bastyr.edu/research/recruit/default.asp for more information.

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