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# Natural Molecules for Healthy Lifestyles: Oleocanthal From Extra Virgin Olive Oil

Vera Francisco <sup>1</sup>, Clara Ruiz-Fernández <sup>1</sup>, Vicente Lahera <sup>2</sup>, Francisca Lago <sup>3</sup>, Jesús Pino <sup>1</sup>, Leandros Skaltsounis <sup>4</sup>, Miguel Angel González-Gay <sup>5</sup>, Ali Mobasheri <sup>6</sup>, Rodolfo Gómez <sup>7</sup>, Morena Scotece <sup>1</sup>, Oreste Gualillo <sup>1</sup>

Affiliations

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- 1 SERGAS (Servizo Galego de Saude) and IDIS (Instituto de Investigación Sanitaria de Santiago), The NEIRID Group (Neuroendocrine Interactions in Rheumatology and Inflammatory Diseases), Santiago University Clinical Hospital, Laboratory 9, Building C, Travesía da Choupana S/N, Santiago de Compostela 15706, Spain.
- 2 Complutense University, School of Medicine, Department of Physiology, Madrid, Spain.
- 3 SERGAS (Servizo Galego de Saude) and IDIS (Instituto de Investigación Sanitaria de Santiago), Laboratory of Cellular and Molecular Cardiology, CIBERCV (Centro de Investigación Biomédica en Red de Enfermedades Cardiovasculares), Laboratory 7, Building C, Travesía da Choupana S/N, Santiago de Compostela 15706, Spain.
- 4 National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Faculty of Pharmacy, Department of Pharmacognosy and Natural Products Chemistry, Athens, 15771, Greece.
- 5 Epidemiology, Genetics and Atherosclerosis Research Group on Systemic Inflammatory Diseases, IDIVAL, Santander, 39011, Spain.
- 6 Department of Regenerative Medicine, State Research Institute Centre for Innovative Medicine, Santariskiu 5, 08661 Vilnius, Lithuania.
- 7 SERGAS (Servizo Galego de Saude) and IDIS (Instituto de Investigación Sanitaria de Santiago), The Musculoskeletal Pathology Group, Santiago University Clinical Hospital, Laboratory 18, Building C, Travesía da Choupana S/N, Santiago de Compostela 15706, Spain.

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## Abstract

Extra virgin olive oil (EVOO) is the main source of fat in the Mediterranean diet. Phenolic compounds of EVOO, in particular, secoiridoids, are minor components that have generated special interest due to their positive effects on human health, supported by several clinical trials. This review summarizes the most recent findings on the pharmacological properties and action's mechanisms of secoiridoid oleocanthal, focusing attention on inflammation, oxidative stress, cancer, neurodegenerative processes, and rheumatic diseases. Being of relevance to the clinical effects of EVOO intake, the bioavailability and biotransformation of EVOO polyphenols are addressed. Moreover, this review summarizes the factors that may influence the oleocanthal concentration in EVOO. With the growing incidence of age- and lifestyle-related diseases, the current data indicated that the administration of EVOO rich in secoiridoids may be helpful in the prevention or treatment of different pathologies with an inflammatory component. Although promising, the future raises several questions and challenges, which are discussed here. The real beneficial effects of olive oil phenols on human health need to be clarified in new, well-designed clinical studies.

**Keywords:** inflammation; neurodegenerative diseases; oleocanthal; rheumatic diseases.

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