



Cancer

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Aspartame Controversy Continues: Is it Safe?

By Andrea Hughes, Ivanhoe Health Correspondent

ORLANDO, Fla. (Ivanhoe Newswire) -- Aspartame, a commonly used artificial sweetener, has been linked to cancer in rats in many studies. However, this conclusion is being challenged, thus creating a controversy surrounding whether or not aspartame should be kept as part of a balanced diet.

The European Ramazzini Foundation (EFP) studied aspartame's affect on the health of rats in 2005 and again this year. Although these two studies have linked it to cancer, the Food & Drug Administration (FDA) is not recommending any changes in the use of aspartame. The FDA released a statement saying, "These data do not provide evidence to alter FDA's conclusion that the use of aspartame is safe."

The Calorie Council, an international non-profit association representing the low-calorie and reduced-fat food and beverage industry, states its concerns regarding the legitimacy of the Ramazzini study. However, according to Kathryn Knowles, the director of Resource Development for the European Ramazzini Foundation, this is simply a reaction from supporters of aspartame.

"[EFP is] an independent, non-profit organization. In the course of our 35 years of cancer research, the kind of reaction we see today to aspartame is a reaction very similar to every time we publish new carcinogenity on a compound. So, this kind of argument, the strategy is two-fold. One, to attack the institution, and then two, attack the methodology, or the design or concept, of the study. Then also three, which we see a lot in aspartame, is to venerate studies that have a different result," Knowles told Ivanhoe.

According to the Calorie Council, a study published in the Annals of Oncology last year found no association between aspartame and cancer in humans, and the Ramazzini study is "at complete odds with the wealth of scientific literature demonstrating that aspartame is safe and not a carcinogen."

When asked what EFP would do about the Calorie Council report and how it would make its findings known and accepted, Knowles said, "We officially have already completed our job -- which is conduct the research and conduct it well, conduct research that is of high quality that has been accepted for publication by peer-reviewed, international scientific journals, like Environmental Health Perspectives, and to publish the work. And we're done; we've finished our job. That is our official position. The data speak for themselves."

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SOURCE: Ivanhoe interview with Kathryn Knowles; Calorie Control Council statement



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webdoctor@ivanhoe.com
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Winter Park, Florida 32789
(407) 740-0789

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P.O. Box 865
Orlando, Florida 32802