Lemon myrtle oil tested against mollusca

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Scientists are developing an interest in studying the essential oils from the following plants because of their ability to impair the growth of microbes:

- lemon
- lemon verbena
- lemongrass
- lemon myrtle

Laboratory studies have found that lemon myrtle oil impairs the growth of bacteria and fungi and may be stronger than tea-tree oil in this regard. Australian researchers are planning to conduct test-tube experiments to assess lemon myrtle oil’s antiviral activity.

**Study details and results**

Despite the lack of published work on lemon myrtle’s antiviral properties, researchers in Idaho have reported that essential oil of the herb lemon myrtle has been tested in a placebo-controlled study of molluscum contagiosum virus (MCV) infection in HIV negative children. Using a 10% solution of lemon myrtle oil, researchers found that it reduced the number of MCV skin lesions by 90% in nine of 16 children who used it. Among the 15 children who received placebo, there was no significant reduction in MCV lesions. In 12 of these placebo recipients, mollusca lesions either stayed the same or became worse. The remaining three children were withdrawn from the study by their parents because their mollusca became worse.

The results from this study are promising and need to be confirmed in another clinical trial. Also, the safety and effectiveness of lemon myrtle oil in PHAs with mollusca or other skin conditions will not be known until further studies are done.

—Sean R. Hosein

**REFERENCES**


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