How Magnolia tree extract fights oral cancer

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Abstract

For over 1,000 years, the extract from Magnolia tree bark has been a popular elixir, treating everything from anxiety to muscle pain. Now, researchers have discovered how Magnolia extract might help treat oral cancer. In mice with oral tumors, the extract suppressed the growth and spread of cancer cells. Experiments revealed three key active compounds responsible for this preventive effect: honokiol, magnolol, and 4-O-methylhonokiol, which are found in many traditional herbal medicines. These compounds acted like poison against oral cancer cells, crippling their ability to fend off harmful oxidants. Understanding how or whether this same mechanism occurs in humans will be crucial, as it could help clarify how Magnolia extract fights cancer and other disorders.