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Help keep your brain hot with curry

By Nigel Hawkes, Health Editor

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The magic ingredient may be curcumin, found in the curry spice turmeric, which possesses potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties, say the authors of the study, led by Tze-Pin Ng from the National University of Singapore.

It is known that long-term users of anti-inflammatory drugs have a reduced risk of developing Alzheimer's, while antioxidants, such as vitamin E, have been shown to protect brain cells in laboratory experiments but have had limited success in alleviating cognitive decline in dementia patients.

In their study the team compared scores on the Mini-Mental State Examination for three categories of regular curry consumption in 1,010 Asians who were between 60 and 93 years old in 2003. Most of them ate curry at least occasionally (once every six months), 43 per cent ate it often or very often (between monthly and daily) while 16 per cent said that they never or rarely ate it.

The team report in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* that people who consumed curry "occasionally" and "often or very often" had significantly better MMSE scores than those who "never or rarely" ate it.