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By Julie Butler

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Olive Oil Times Contributor | Reporting from Barcelona

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) last month approved the cla “consumption of olive oil polyphenols contributes to the protection of blood li from oxidative damage .”

Here we speak to the leader of the research team whose investigation of EV health benefits was pivotal to the approval.

Dr. María-Isabel Covas is head of the Cardiovascular Risk and Nutrition Res Group at the IMIM-Research Institute , Hospital del Mar in Barcelona, Spa is also head investigator of the CIBER of Obesity and Nutrition (CIBEROE Network of Research Groups of Excellence in Spain. Last week she won an inaugural Catalan olive oil DOPs prize in recognition of her outstanding rese

Dr. Covas explains why lipid oxidation matters and that the key to benefiting EVOO is not to take it as a medicine. “You must enjoy it.”

Please tell us about the research that led to the EFSA approval.

Our research started about twelve years ago and focuses on the health bene olive oil, in particular the effects of its polyphenols on the heart. Until 2004, it been known that olive oil was good for you but there was a controversy over vivo antioxidant power (in humans) of the polyphenols.

We started several studies with Catalan olive oil and our hypotheses were successful but we needed full proof, because in this area of science, for a he professional to be able to say, “take this, it is good for you,” you need eviden randomized and controlled studies with humans. You also need to be very a when you determine the average daily dose necessary to get sufficient quan polyphenols, because the effect will be not a pharmacological one but physi

We therefore held an initial trial with Catalan olive oil involving about 30 heal individuals here in Catalonia. We also did another study here with 38 people stable coronary heart disease. Then, in order to have definitive clinical proof organized a European study, the EUROLIVE Study, encompassing 200 h