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STUDY SHOWS EATING PEANUTS REGULARLY IS ASSOCIATED with FEWER DEATHS, ESPECIALLY from HEART DISEASE

Albany, GA March 5, 2015 - Eating peanuts may be a simple way to increase longevity, even for high risk populations. A new study of over 200,000 people shows that peanut-eaters decreased total deaths by 21% and reduced cardiovascular deaths by 38%. The study was released this week in the *Journal of the American Medical Association Internal Medicine (JAMA Internal Medicine)* and was conducted at Vanderbilt University and the Shanghai Cancer Institute.

It is the first study to demonstrate that all races – black, white and Asian- who are predominantly from lower socio-economic, high risk groups could benefit from eating peanuts and peanut butter. Other major studies that have linked peanut and nut consumption with lower mortality focused mainly on higher income, white populations. The link between peanuts and decreased mortality was seen across all ethnicities, for men and women, income status, and even for individuals with a high prevalence of metabolic disorders.

Three large groups were evaluated. In the US, about 72,000 people from twelve southeastern states participated in the Southern Community Cohort Study (SCCS). They ranged from 40-79 years old, two-thirds were African-American, and participants were primarily from low-income communities. Over 75% of the group was overweight or obese and over 76% had metabolic conditions such as hypertension (55%), diabetes (21%) and high cholesterol (34%) which increased their health risks.

The other two groups included about 134,000 people from the Shanghai Woman's Health Study and the Shanghai Men's Health Study. They ranged from 40-74 years old.

Peanuts were the primary nuts consumed in the study. They comprised over 50% of the nuts eaten by the SCCS group in the US. Only peanuts were assessed in the Shanghai groups, since that is the predominant nut consumed. Participants recorded how frequently they ate the peanuts, nuts or peanut butter ranging from never to daily.

“Increasing peanut consumption may provide a potentially cost-efficient approach to improving cardiovascular health,” said senior author Xio-Ou Shu, MD, PhD, associate director for Global Health at the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center and professor of Medicine in the Department of Epidemiology.

The paper concludes that the “findings highlight a substantive public health impact of peanut consumption in lowering Cardiovascular Disease mortality given the affordability of peanuts to individuals from all SES backgrounds.”

Peanuts are a nutrient dense plant protein that are high in unsaturated fatty acids, fiber, essential vitamins, minerals, phenolic antioxidants, arginine, and other phytochemicals. This powerful package of nutrients may explain the significant benefits of eating a small amount of peanuts or peanut butter daily.

The study was funded by the US National Cancer Institute.

If you would like further information on peanuts and health visit peanut-institute.org or peanutpower.org. The Peanut Institute is a non-profit organization that supports nutrition research and educational programs on the role of peanuts in healthy lifestyles.

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