

New Research Claims Clearer Understanding of Relationship between sugar and cancer

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Johan Thevelein, Wim Versées and Veerle Janssens started researching sugar's link to cancer in 2008 to try and better understand what's called the Warburg effect, when tumor cells make energy through a rapid breakdown of glucose not seen in normal cells. That energy fuels tumor growth.

The research "is able to explain the correlation between the strength of the Warburg effect and tumor aggressiveness," Thevelein, from KU Leuven in Belgium, said in a release. "This link between sugar and cancer has sweeping consequences. Our results provide a foundation for future research in this domain, which can now be performed with a much more precise and relevant focus."

While it's a monumental finding for the research team, it's not a medical breakthrough. It also doesn't prove that eating a low-sugar diet could change a cancer diagnosis.

"The findings are not sufficient to identify the primary cause of the Warburg effect," Thevelein said in a release. "Further research is needed to find out whether this primary cause is also conserved in yeast cells."

VIB, KU Leuven and Vrije Universiteit Brussel researchers conducted the study. VIB is a life sciences research institute that works with five universities, including KU Leuven, and is funded by the Flemish government.