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Application of Manuka honey in treatment patients with GERD

Abstract: Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is one of the most common diseases in world population and has systematically increase in Western countries over recent years. The treatment of GERD includes pharmacological and non-pharmacological therapies.

Honey is a natural product with health-promoting properties. Recent studies show that Manuka honey, which comes from New Zealand and Australia, stand out from other traditional honeys. This product is characterized by potent antibacterial, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. This is due to the presence of various bioactive compounds (e.g. polyphenols, particularly flavonoids and phenolic acids) and high content of methylglyoxal (MGO), which in other honeys is in trace amount. Taking into account the unique ingredients and health benefits of Manuka honey, it is considered as medicinal honey and allows to use it for medical purposes, e.g. acceleration of wound healing or reduction of inflammation of gastrointestinal mucosa (reduction gastroenteritis).

Thus, the aim of research was the application of Manuka honey in treatment patients with GERD.

The study was conducted on a group of patients, which consumed Manuka honey or placebo for a period of 4 weeks. The gastroscopy and histology have been made twice, i.e. before and after experiment. Furthermore, the symptoms reports and nutritional interviews has been collected.

The endoscopical examination showed that in Manuka group the improvement was 73.3%. In the sub-groups of oesophagitis-A and oesophagitis-B it was 81.8%, and 50%, respectively. However, in Placebo group, the general improvement rate was much lower. The results have been confirmed in the histopathological examination. Moreover, it is worth noticing, that in sub-group declaring non-medication, the improvement was only for patients consuming Manuka honey. Changes of symptoms in subjective assessment of patients were evaluated after 2 and 4 weeks. The improvement rate in Manuka group was 86.7% and 100%, while in Placebo group it was only 26.7% and 40%, respectively.

Manuka honey seems to be effective in GERD, which have been confirmed by subjective feelings of patients and by endoscopic and histopathologic examination. We concluded that consumption of Manuka honey combined with proper diet and drugs (proton-pump inhibitors) could be a triple therapy regimen for GERD. Our research is a pilot study before administration of Manuka honey to larger population. The results are promising and may facilitate the quality of life of patients with GERD, e.g. relieving heartburn and regurgitation.