

(Caterpillar, continued from page 1) enhancing properties. One study mentions that Cordyceps "was used to hasten recovery from exhaustion in ancient China"³. Another study notes "testosterone-like effects", and describes increased oxygen uptake by cardiac and cerebral tissues⁴. Other researchers have documented Cordyceps "male sex hormone action"⁵, increased endurance to hypoxia (lack of oxygen)^{4,5}, and improved liver function⁶, some or all of which could account for its claimed athletic benefits.

Additional Health Benefits

The best documented effects of Cordyceps are in areas other than athletic performance. Chinese research documents powerful immune-enhancing properties of the fungus in human and animal tests, including "acceleration in splenic regeneration and growth, leading to an increase in immunological function"⁷, augmenting natural killer cell activity⁸, and increasing T-helper cells and phagocytic activity⁹.

Cordyceps and its extracts also exhibit specific anti-cancer effect in human and animal studies. Various clinical studies report reduction in tumor size³, direct cytotoxicity against tumor cells and potent antitumor activity⁹, significant lifespan extension (in tumor-induced animals)^{2,10,11}, and strong inhibition of growth of cancerous tumors¹².

Significant protective effects on kidney tissue and function have been reported in studies on rats¹³ and aged humans¹⁴. Cordyceps also shows promise as a therapy for Lupus¹⁵, an intriguing ability to increase the amount of superoxide dismutase (SOD) in mouse liver cell cultures¹⁶, and has been noted to improve the loss of sexual drive in aged humans¹⁷.

New Formula

If you want to try cordyceps, it is available through some Chinese phar-

macies in the U.S., and in a new formula from Neways Corporation called Ming Gold. The results of the Chinese track and field athletes indicate that Cordyceps may produce additional stamina, strength, energy, and athletic prowess, but the scientific evidence we have found so far in this area is not conclusive. We will continue our research into Cordyceps, both in the medical literature and in personal testing. We hope to bring you a more conclusive recommendation on this unique supplement in the near future. ■

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“This is what I tell my trainees to drink,’ says coach ma. Caterpillar fungus.”

RUNNING ON CATERPILLARS

So long, steroids -- the latest supposed athletic miracle is dong chong xia cao, the concoction to which the Chinese women's track team recently attributed their multiple-medal-winning performance at the world championships last year. Others in the sports world are skeptical, to say the least, but Chinese herbalists support the idea that the powder which is made of caterpillars that died and the fungus that subsequently grows on them strengthens the lungs, and boosts circulation and immune activity. If you can stomach the thought, you can get a one-ounce (roughly two-dose) taste of worm-power for around \$35 in New York's Chinatown shops.

World Records Fall to Caterpillar Fungus

In 1993, the Chinese rocked the athletic world with a series of record performances in distance running. The women's track team, previously unranked in world competition, was suddenly demolishing world records right and left, and the experts were left "shaking their heads in stunned disbelief".

What's the secret behind the recent Chinese success in athletic performance? Hard work, said coach Ma Junren--and caterpillar fungus. "This is what I tell my trainees to drink", says coach Ma.

Magic Chinese Mushroom?

What is the mysterious potion these athletes point to as the secret of their success? It's a type a fungus, called Cordyceps sinensis, which grows on the larva of a caterpillar²This relatively rare fungus is well-regarded in China, where it fetches \$700 per kilo at wholesale.

Scientific studies on cordyceps revealed limited clinical data about its athletic performance.

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