

Mycologist promotes agarikon as a possibility to counter growing antibiotic resistance

October 24 2014, by Bob Yirka



American mycologist (mushroom researcher), holding an Agarikon mushroom (*Laricifomes officinalis*). Credit: Wikimedia

(Phys.org) —Mycologist Paul Stamets is espousing the health benefits of agarikon, a fungus that grows on trees in old growth forests in North America and Europe. He's written and published a blog piece in the *Huffington Post*, describing the known antibacterial and antiviral abilities

of the fungus and suggesting we take better care of our old growth forests as a means of survival in an uncertain future.

Agarikon grows to resemble a very large beehive and grows like a fruit hanging from the places where branches connect to trunks on old tall trees. Historians have noted that Native Americans mashed the fungus and used it as a medical remedy for a variety of ailments. Stamets notes that even the ancient Greeks knew about the medicinal qualities of agarikon, suggesting in an early text that it was useful for combating a host of diseases. Thereafter in Europe and the U.S. it became known as a treatment for several [lung ailments](#) including consumption (tuberculosis).

Stamets has been working with the University of Illinois to more closely study the medicinal benefits of the fungi, starting shortly after 9/11. He and the team there found that administration of agarikon showed anti-tubular activity when testing against the tuberculosis bacteria, reaffirming ancient beliefs. They also reaffirmed that eating the fungi can reduce inflammation and that it can be used to help combat both bacterial and viral infections. Thus far, he reports, research has shown strong activity against cowpox, swine and bird flu and the virus that causes herpes. In some instances, he notes the effectiveness was better in some cases than conventional therapies. He claims also that thus far there is no indication that agarikon is toxic to humans.

But Stamets mission is not focused solely on agarikon, he's convinced that there are other [natural remedies](#) just waiting to be discovered (he notes that the majority of modern medicines originated in nature) and because of that, we should be more careful about destroying ecosystems, particularly old growth forests. He goes so far as to suggest that such forests be declared part of our national defense system because they could possibly hold cures for maladies unleashed by bioterrorists. In that respect, Stamets is aligned with others considering the possibility of natural remedies existing in places such as rainforests being destroyed

before we have a chance to discover them.

More information: *Huffington Post*, www.huffingtonpost.com/paul-st...hroom_b_1861947.html

© 2014 Phys.org

Citation: Mycologist promotes agarikon as a possibility to counter growing antibiotic resistance (2014, October 24) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-10-mycologist-agarikon-possibility-counter-antibiotic.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.