

Pioneering Solutions for Pain Relief

According to the National Center for Health Statistics, one in every four Americans has suffered from chronic pain lasting more than 24 hours. Tampa-based Aldali Inc. and the University of South Florida (USF) aim to reverse that statistic through a new collaboration made possible by The Corridor's Matching Grants Research Program (MGRP).

"Our goal is to enhance the quality of life with an affordable herbal alternative," said Melissa Astorquiza, sales director for Aldali Inc.

The company's unique ointment, Asteeza Natural Body Wonder, contains a distinctive combination of natural, herbal ingredients that do not irritate skin, change temperature or emit an unpleasant odor. Asteeza has been endorsed by Tampa-area pharmacists, the Arthritis Foundation and the Florida Massage Therapy Association, and is available at four local pharmacies, including USF Health's Pharmacy Plus. Now, through the MGRP partnership with USF, Aldali Inc. aims to establish the ointment as a viable solution for millions of consumers nationwide who are eager for a natural, non-addictive alternative.

Leading research at the university is Dr. Dustin Hardwick, assistant professor of physical therapy and rehabilitation sciences. He shares a desire to establish non-pharmacological ways to positively impact pain. An expert in physical therapy and movement science, Hardwick will lead the assessment of

safety and initial efficacy of Asteeza among healthy adults with sore muscles.

"We're mimicking the pharmacological model of demonstrating safety first and then demonstrating the real efficacy in follow-up studies," he explained.

Hardwick looks forward to the effect a successful trial would have on his work in physical therapy. Efforts to help a patient achieve a greater range of motion are often hindered by pain and inflammation at the treatment site.

"If we can get something like Asteeza to help take the edge off the pain and impact some of the inflammation, as a physical therapist, that gives me more options within my exercise treatment," said Hardwick. "I can do more with them during therapy sessions without the pain negatively impacting their ability to participate."



Although funding from The Corridor's MGRP has been essential to short-term project goals, including the addition of a USF doctoral student to the research team, Astorquiza believes its implications will someday be realized on a much larger scale.

"The collaboration with USF's physical therapy and rehabilitation sciences department has been an outstanding experience. Their cutting-edge approach to research and level of expertise has greatly impacted our ability to realize our goals of extending our reach and making Asteeza available to those in need," she said. "Simultaneously, the support of The Corridor on this project will have a direct, positive impact on our economy by maximizing resources found in nature that have been used successfully worldwide for thousands of years." ■