Seafood illness under ‘scope

FGCU professor is lead investigator in study to understand a common type of food poisoning.

By Kevin Lollar

They don’t look much unlike the microscopic organisms that are found in the ocean, but these toxic algae are a cause for concern. Gambierdiscus cells cause ciguatera fish poisoning, which affects tens of thousands of people worldwide every year.

Mike Parsons, FGCU professor of marine sciences, and an international team of researchers have received a $4 million grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to understand what causes ciguatera, its effects on humans and how to prevent it.

Gambierdiscus algae, which are related to the red tide organism but produce a toxin that is different from the red tide toxins, are found in the ocean and in some tropical fish. Ciguatera fish poisoning starts at the bottom of the food chain and has the potential to kill a person.

“Ciguatera is the most common type of seafood poisoning,” Parsons said.

Eating seafood exposed to this algae can be fatal, but most often leads to a severe, unpleasant illness. The illness is the most der-reported, so there might be hundreds of thousands of cases, with ciguatera poisoning.

Last year, Parsons and his research team took a closer look at the toxin and published findings in the journal *Toxicon*.

The team, led by Parsons, conducted experiments on Gambierdiscus, which is related to the red tide organism but produces a different toxin. The research was supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Gambierdiscus is found in the ocean and in some tropical fish, and its toxins can cause ciguatera fish poisoning. The illness is the most common type of seafood poisoning and is der-reported, so there might be hundreds of thousands of cases.

People eating ciguatoxin-contaminated fish can come down with ciguatera – cooking does not make the fish safe.
DIEU:

Al-Qaida's leader backs Syrian revolt

The Associated Press

BEIRUT — Al-Qaida's leader has called for the mass defection of Syrian rebels, saying they should fight a "sweeping" civil war that will show "the greatest sacrifices of all time."

The revolt against the rule of President Bashar Assad has been "the most severe" since the 1979 Afghan war that marked the U.S. entry into the fight against Soviet-backed communism, she said.

"The question is not about winning or losing, but about honor and making peace," she said. "We were not afraid of martyrdom when we were with God."

She did not explicitly call for a military assault. An independent military source said she would be able to avoid what was "a war for the sake of war."'

"When position is between bad and worse, you will pick the worse, but you will not avoid what is worse," she said.

"We want to show the whole world that our revolution will be able to pay even these reductions," she said. "Our struggle for freedom will be a war for the sake of all of humanity."

She also criticized Obama's administration for its handling of the crisis in Syria and said she did not believe that Syria would survive as a nation after the current war.

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