the effects of the naturally-occurring ellagitannins.

So Amazentis has come up with the idea of short-circuiting the natural process by producing urolithin A as a dietary supplement like vitamin C - and potentially with just as big a market.

Euromonitor estimates the worldwide dietary supplements market at about $50 billion in 2015 with annual growth of 4.4%. Including energy drinks and vitamins, the market is expected to exceed $100 billion next year.

The pomegranate, whose benefits have long been known, is already part of this market. A Californian company founded in 2002, Pom Wonderful, has built a success story on the exploitation of its juice - but without strong scientific evidence to back it up or critical understanding of the role of the intestinal flora that vary between individuals.

Cardio and neuro applications
In addition to its strategy of developing dietary supplements from natural products on a scientific basis, Amazentis has done all the work for the commercial launch of urolithin A including preparing for scale production and studying the impact of industrialised processes on product composition.

So after five years of applied and fundamental research, it is ready. “The first clinical results on humans let us consider fairly rapid commercialisation,” says Chris Rinsch. “But Amazentis does not plan to be a mere subcontractor of the food industry. Starting our own product is one of the tracks envisaged.”

It may be possible to justify a premium price by marketing urolithin A as a dietary supplement sold in the same way as vitamin C or magnesium rather than just as an ingredient to enrich yogurt or cereal.

But, as has been seen with omega 3, both approaches are possible, especially as urolithin A could have applications - albeit yet to be demonstrated - in the cardiac field and on the brain, for example in preventing Parkinson’s disease.

THE SICHH: RE-THINKING BOX OF INCUBATOR AND INNOVATION CATALYST

BY DR. JEAN-MARC BRUNNER

IN A WORLD WHERE FUNDAMENTAL AND APPLIED RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT NEED TO INTERACT MORE EFFECTIVELY, THE SWISS INTEGRATIVE CENTER FOR HUMAN HEALTH (SICHH) DISTINGUISHES ITSELF BY ITS INTEGRATIVE, HOLISTIC APPROACH.

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