

Ginkgo Biloba Alleviates Neuropsychiatric Symptoms in Dementia

Source: Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment

Ginkgo is among the oldest living species on earth and has been used extensively as a medicinal agent worldwide for centuries. It is the most frequently prescribed medicinal herb in Europe, with hundreds of studies reporting positive effects from taking ginkgo for both the prevention and treatment of various health complaints. The most dramatic benefits are reported in improving circulation in the elderly. This can lead to enhanced memory, possibly delaying the onset of Alzheimer's disease, reducing senile dementia, tinnitus, and vertigo. Ginkgo's memory-enhancing effects are reported in younger populations as well.

Dementias are disorders with symptoms of memory loss and a decrease in cognition and the ability to reason. Dementia, sometimes called "senility," is not a part of the normal aging process, and shows that some other disease may be present. Dementia affects a person's ability to be successful in carrying out their activities of daily living. Accurate diagnosis of the disease that is present is necessary for treating the dementia properly.

In a randomized, controlled, double-blind, multicenter clinical trial, researchers investigated the effects of ginkgo biloba extract in patients with dementia. The study included 410 patients with mild to moderate dementia who were randomized to receive either 240 mg of a ginkgo biloba extract (EGb 761) or placebo for 24 weeks. The results revealed that treatment with the ginkgo biloba extract appears to improve neuropsychiatry symptoms in patients with dementia. Significant improvements were seen in the symptoms of apathy/indifference, sleep/night-time behavior, irritability/lability, depression/dysphoria and aberrant motor behavior. It was also found that the caregivers' stress evaluation showed similar improvements. These findings suggest that ginkgo biloba extract is a safe and effective treatment option to reduce behavioral and psychiatric symptoms in patients with mild to moderate dementia.

Bachinskava N, Hoerr R, Ihl R. Alleviating neuropsychiatric symptoms in dementia: the effects of Ginkgo biloba extract EGb 761. Findings from a randomized controlled trial. *Neuropsychiatr Dis Treat.* 2011;7:209-15.