

Ashwagandha Root Extract May Improve Sexual Function & Satisfaction in Women

By Stephen Daniells



Supplements of ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) root extract may improve sexual function in healthy women, according to results of a double blind, randomized, placebo-controlled pilot trial.

Data from 50 women indicated that eight weeks of supplementation with the Ayurvedic herb at a daily dose of 600 was associated with significant improvements in sexual interest, arousal, lubrication and in achieving orgasm, compared to placebo.

Ashwagandha supplementation caused a marked reduction in sexually related distress in women during the study, wrote the researchers in the journal *BioMed Research International* .

“We should emphasize that our results should not be interpreted as implying that ashwagandha is an aphrodisiac,” stated the researchers. “In our study, [high-concentration ashwagandha root extract] supplementation failed to improve sexual “desire,” as seen in the nonsignificant improvement in the [Female Sexual Function Index] FSFI “desire” domain score and in the number of total sexual encounters.”

The flagship herb of Ayurveda

Ashwagandha has been gaining traction in the mainstream US market with consumers embracing its wide-ranging body of health benefits, which include supporting stress, cognitive function, sleep, metabolic wellness, adrenal function, sports performance, and more.

According to a monograph from the American Herbal Pharmacopoeia (AHP), the herb has a history of use in ayurvedic medicine that dates back as much as 4,000 years to the teaching of

renowned scholar Punarvasu Atreya, and in subsequent works that make up the ayurvedic tradition. The name of the herb derives from Sanskrit, and means “smells like a horse”, which refers to the strong smell of the root which is said to be redolent of horse sweat or urine.

The new study used Ixoreal Biomed’s KSM-66 Ashwagandha and Kartikeya Baldwa, Director of Ixoreal Biomed, said that ashwagandha root has traditionally recommended for use as an enhancer of sexual function in both men and women.

“While there are other published studies demonstrating the effectiveness of ashwagandha in improving sexual function in men, this is the first study using a standardized, branded ashwagandha extract and demonstrating significant positive effects on sexual function in women,” he said.

“From the scientific literature, we know that the ashwagandha root is a calming agent, and promotes balance in the body to increase or decrease key hormone levels to bring them to appropriate levels,” he added. “These effects are perhaps responsible for the significant effects we see in this study. Female sexual dysfunction and satisfaction is a complex phenomenon with both psychological and physiological dimensions. KSM-66 is one of the very few ingredients shown to be clinically effective for this application.”

Study details

The researchers recruited 50 women aged between 21 and 50 and randomly assigned them to receive either placebo or a high-concentration ashwagandha root extract (300 mg twice daily, KSM-66 Ashwagandha) for eight weeks.

Using the Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI) Questionnaire and the Female Sexual Distress Scale (FSDS), the researchers found that ashwagandha supplementation led to significantly greater improvement in the FSFI Total score, relative to the placebo.

Supplementation was also associated with significantly greater improvements in FSFI score for “arousal”, “lubrication”, “orgasm”, and “satisfaction”, said the researchers.

“The explanation for why [high-concentration ashwagandha root extract] treatment was useful in reducing [female sexual dysfunction] may lie in two pathways: (1) ashwagandha’s role in reducing stress, which in turn is associated with [female sexual dysfunction], and (2) ashwagandha’s role in increasing testosterone which is a factor in androgen deficiency syndrome which in turn is also associated with [female sexual dysfunction],” they wrote.

Source: BioMed Research International

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“Efficacy and Safety of Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) Root Extract in Improving Sexual Function in Women: A Pilot Study”

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