

Ashwagandha for Stress & Anxiety



THEORY:

Stressful situations can cause increases in levels of serum cortisol, and increase levels of anxiety and depression in otherwise healthy adults. Ashwagandha is an adaptogen known to promote homeostasis. Can ashwagandha reduce stress and anxiety, and improve general well-being in otherwise healthy adults under stress?



PARAMETERS:

A single-center, prospective, double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled trial at Asha Hospital, Hyderabad, India. A total of 64 healthy adults received 300 mg twice daily of ashwagandha (as KSM-66) or placebo for eight weeks. Efficacy measured using Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) score, serum cortisol level, General Health Questionnaire-28 (GHQ-28) score, and Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS) score.



OUTCOME:

After eight weeks, adults taking ashwagandha:



PSS score was reduced **44%**



Serum cortisol levels were reduced **27.9%**



GHQ-28 scores were markedly reduced by **72.9%**, with greatest reduction in the **79.3%** decline.



DASS domain scores dropped **71.6%**, with the biggest decrease in the **77.0%** depression domain at



All changes were **statistically significant** compared to placebo.



Researchers concluded: "High-concentration full-spectrum Ashwagandha root extract improves an individual's resistance toward stress and thereby improves self-assessed quality of life."



IMPACT:



Clinical depression costs over \$51 billion in absenteeism from work and lost productivity, and \$26 billion in direct treatment costs.¹ And it is projected that mental disease, including stress-related disorders, will be the second leading cause of disabilities by 2020.² Ashwagandha is known to reduce serum cortisol levels; and reduces over-excitation of neurons, producing calmness and increasing focus and mental well-being. The study results suggest ashwagandha (as KSM-66) safely and effectively reduces levels of stress and depression, as well as physiological markers of anxiety.

1. *J Clin Psychiatry*. 2003;64(12):1465-75

2. *Metabolism*. 2002;51(6 Suppl 1):49-53

Source: Chandrasekhar K, Kapoor J, Anishetty S. "A Prospective, Randomized Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Study of Safety and Efficacy of a High-Concentration Full-Spectrum Extract of Ashwagandha Root in Reducing Stress and Anxiety in Adults." *Indian J Psychol Med*. 2012 Jul-Sep;34(3):255-262. DOI: 10.4103/0253-7176.106022.