

Effects of Korean Red Ginseng in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease

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Objectives: Ginseng is one of the most popular herbs throughout the world. Among various medical applications, it seems to have significant effects as a cognitive enhancing drug. In this investigation we examined the treatment efficacy of Korean Red Ginseng (KRG) on cognition in Alzheimer's disease.

Patients and Methods: The trial was designed as a 12-week randomized study. Sixty one patients (24 male and 37 female) with Alzheimer's disease were randomized to Korean Red Ginseng 4.5g per day (n=15), or 9g per day (n=15), or placebo group (n=31). We measured 12 weeks change in cognitive and functional performance with Alzheimer's Disease Assessment Scale (ADAS), Korean version of Mini-Mental Status Examination (K-MMSE) and Clinical Dementia Rating (CDR) scale.

Results: The ADAS and CDR score showed a significant improvement after 12 weeks of KRG therapy group (9g/day) compared with control group (p=0.032 and 0.006, respectively). Mean change from baseline in scores on the MMSE, although out of statistical significance, illustrated improvement in KRG group opposite to control group (1.42 vs -0.48).

Conclusion: KRG threatment showed feasible efficacies for Alzheimer's disease in this present. Larger samples of patients and extended period of follow-up should be considered to confirm these results.