

Nutraceuticals | Nutraceuticals | Functional Foods | Dietary Supplements

NuFFooDS

Volume 4 | Issue 3 | November 2016 | ₹100
www.nuffoodsspectrum.in

perspectives on science & business
Spectrum

68 pages including cover



Herbs and Stress Free Life



Dr Sanjay Agrawal

Pharmaceuticals Consultants and Editor –in Chief of IJMToday

Fight or flight is an essential instinct for survival, but when the biological triggers that prompt the body's response to fear fall out of alignment, anxiety and phobias can result. If left unchecked and/or untreated, anxieties and phobias can become debilitating.

In today's world, man is trying to achieve too many things at the same time. In this process, he is subjected to a tremendous amount of physical and mental stress. Stress for long time, whether a result of mental or emotional upset or due to physical factors such as malnutrition, surgery, chronic illness, chemical exposure, excessive exercise, disturbed sleeping hours, or a host of other environmental causes, results in predictable systemic effects. The systemic effects of stress include increased levels of stress hormones such as cortisol, a decline in certain aspects of immune system function or body resistance, such as natural killer cell cytotoxicity or secretory- IgA levels and a disturbance of gastrointestinal microflora balance. These systemic changes might be a significant contributor to stress associated ill-health.

Historically, St. John's wort has been the 'go to' botanical for treating mild depression. Kava, valerian and passion flower have also been quite popular for relaxation and sleep improvement. Suppliers have continued to broaden their offerings of plant-origin, mood support ingredients, and are lending greater credibility to the segment with products that are supported by strong clinical science.

"Consumers are increasingly turning to natural solutions, and particularly to the use of plants," says Amandine Moco De Sa, business manager, Naturex, Avignon, France. "Among the plants most used for stress conditions, such as passion flower, St John's wort, hops and lavender, Naturex is particularly interested in lemon balm due to its long history of use. Its leaves have been used since antiquity for their comforting properties."

To that end, Naturex developed its Cyracos ingredient from a specific variety of lemon balm leaves that have been substantiated for efficacy through clinical studies. "The manufacturing process for Cyracos is traditional and maintains

the full spectrum of actives from the plant," Moco De Sa said. She added that clinical studies conducted on the ingredient confirmed its efficacy. "Results demonstrated that 600 mg of CyraCos per day during a period of only two weeks significantly reduces stress-associated symptoms without any side effects, such as drowsiness."

A key ingredient for mood health, Relora is a blend of plants used in traditional Chinese medicine that hinges on two ingredients: *Magnolia officinalis* bark extract and *Phellodendron amurense* bark extract. Previous studies have confirmed Relora's ability to help "quiet the part of the brain that responds to stress." (The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis; however, a study published in August in the *Journal of the International Society of Sports Nutrition* cemented the ingredient's unique calming effect as it relates to cortisol levels. Cortisol is a biochemical hormone released during times of stress. An excessive amount of circulating cortisol is a primary cause of feelings of anxiety and stress.)

The double-blind, placebo-controlled trial followed 56 subjects for four weeks as they were exposed to normal daily stressors. Those who took Relora for four weeks as compared to those taking placebo experienced the following results: anger reduced by 42 percent, fatigue reduced by 31 percent, confusion reduced by 27 percent, depression reduced by 20 percent, cortisol reduced by 18 percent, tension reduced by 18 percent, overall stress reduced by 11 percent and global mood state increased by 18 percent, says Next Pharmaceuticals' former VP Deanne Dolnick. These results indicate that daily use of Relora reduces cortisol exposure and perceived stress while improving a variety of mood parameters, suggesting an effective natural approach to controlling the detrimental health effects of chronic stress without the tranquilizing side effects of pharmaceutical agents.

Based on human and animal research, it appears that a variety of nutritional and botanical substances—such as adaptogenic herbs, which reduces stress, specific vitamins including ascorbic acid, vitamin B1 and vitamin B6, the coenzyme forms of vitamin B5 (Pantothenic Acid), B12 (Methylcobalamin), the amino acid tyrosine, and other nutrients such as lipoic acid, phosphatidylserine, and plant sterol/sterolin combinations—may allow individuals to sustain an adaptive response and minimize some of the systemic effects of stress. Nutrition should be in useful scientific proposition of vitamins, minerals, and amino acids.

For centuries, man has used plants for their healing properties. Today, we refer to these plants as herbs. These plants play a principal part in all treatment modalities, both ancient and modern. The gentle, nourishing, and synergistic actions of herbal medicine make it an excel-

lent treatment of choice for all systems.

Research interest has focused on various herbs that own to reduce cholesterol; anti-platelet, anti-tumor, or improving body resistance properties that may be useful adjuncts in helping reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer. Many of these herbs contain potent antioxidant compounds that provide significant protection against chronic diseases. These compounds may protect LDL cholesterol from oxidation, inhibit cyclooxygenase and lipoxygenase enzymes, inhibit lipid peroxidation, or have antiviral or antitumor activity. The volatile essential oils of commonly used culinary herbs, spices, and herbal teas inhibit mevalonate synthesis and thereby suppress cholesterol synthesis and tumor growth.

Garlic, Ginseng, Ginkgo Biloba, Turmeric, Red Chili, Biotin, Ashwagandha, Draksha, Ajwayan, Pipali, Sunthi and Fudina are the most commonly ingested herbs and the medical sciences supports their usefulness for some conditions in humans.

Magnesium treatment induces a unique pattern of action on brain regions involved in and responsible for the body's emotional processes. It heightens the function of the prefrontal cortex, a brain region involved in controlling fear responses, without affecting the function of the amygdala—the brain's evolutionary conserved region involved in fear memory formation and storage. By increasing brain magnesium through Magtein, cognitive ability goes up, fear memory remains unchanged and is better controlled.

A warm glass of milk has long been considered to be a safe and effective fix for mild bouts of insomnia, but for Pharmachem Laboratories Inc., Kearny, NJ, a milk protein hydrolysate has demonstrated promise for effective relaxation and, subsequently, mood support. Lactium is a milk protein hydrolysate that has sound research showing its positive effects on promoting mood stabilization, promoting healthy, restful sleep and promoting relaxation to keep anxiety at bay. In total, five separate studies have been conducted in recent years on 90 healthy subjects, which confirmed the anti-stress efficacy of Lactium. Several studies have been conducted on Lactium, demonstrating clear efficacy in stress relief, which by natural extension improves mood.

Together, data is consistent with the view that the consumption of complex mixtures of extracts and isolated components of whole foods is effective at extending lifespan. These results are consistent with a large body of epidemiological evidence indicating that the consumption of dietary supplements is associated with stress free life. Thus, by taking natural products and herbs we can easily fight stress and its related consequences. **NS**