



Think more clearly and manage life better with Ginkgo

German researchers demonstrate enhanced mental performance and an improved ability to cope with everyday life in Alzheimer patients taking the proprietary Ginkgo extract EGb 761®

KARLSRUHE, Germany, 25 May 2010. “The proprietary Ginkgo extract EGb 761® improves the mental performance of Alzheimer patients and helps them cope better with everyday life”, states Professor Stefan Willich (Scientific Director of the Center for Human and Health Sciences at the Charité University Hospital in Berlin), summing up all the available evidence. “Six well conducted studies involving 1,269 patients showed that EGb 761® has a clearly significant clinical effect.”

“Worldwide Ginkgo research spanning more than 30 years has produced a wealth of scientific data and knowledge”, says Professor Graf von der Schulenburg of the University of Hanover. “Using modern techniques and methodology, we were able to filter out the essentials and get to the required level of clarification.”

Is Ginkgo really effective, or does some residual doubt remain? Over the recent years and decades, the vast amount of published data on Ginkgo was a source of both astonishment and questions within the research community. The volume of data emanating from varied research fields can be a source of confusion and make it difficult to gain an overview, even for researchers. With over 150 million daily doses of Ginkgo extract being taken every year in Germany alone, making it one of the most widely used medicines, the German research team wanted to investigate whether the rationale behind this routine, daily use is indeed scientifically robust.

The team, working under Professor Willich, worked through the Ginkgo scientific literature from around the world, looking for studies matching current international drug research standards to enable clear conclusions about the effectiveness and safety of Ginkgo extract to be drawn. The investigators identified nine studies that involved patients suffering from dementia of either Alzheimer’s or vascular type . All nine studies were conducted using the extract EGb 761® and eight involved a placebo comparison. The patients received the Ginkgo extract for up to 52 weeks at a daily dosage up to 240 mg. Using the mathematical techniques of meta-analysis, the research team analysed the results for all 2,372 participants in these studies. For six of the nine studies, an additional evaluation purely of Alzheimer type patients was also possible.

The clear outcome of the meta-analysis was that participants taking EGb 761® performed significantly better in both memory tests as well as other mental tasks than the participants taking placebo. Furthermore, family members confirmed that Alzheimer patients who took Ginkgo extract managed their everyday lives better. The effects were most pronounced at the higher dose of 240 mg per day. Tolerance was good: neither side effects nor drop-outs as a result of side-effects were any more frequent with EGb 761® than with the placebo.

These results tally very well with those of a totally separate project employing similar techniques to analyse data from Ginkgo biloba studies. That project was an assessment done by the Institute for Quality and Effectiveness (IQWiG) in late 2008. [IQWiG is the independent German foundation responsible for providing national guidance on the clinical benefit of drugs and is comparable to the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) in the UK.] The IQWiG assessment confirmed the value of EGb 761® in Alzheimer's disease stating "Patients with Alzheimer's disease can benefit from Ginkgo products, provided they are taking a high dose."

"The essential elements of 30 years of Ginkgo research have now been analysed using current methodology. Patients with mild to moderate Alzheimer symptoms can better manage their everyday lives and improve their mental performance by taking EGb 761® - with the added benefit of good tolerance." says Prof. Michael Habs, member of the Board of Directors at Dr. Willmar Schwabe GmbH & Co. KG, Karlsruhe, the company that produces EGb 761® , which is marketed in Germany under the tradename Tebonin®.

EGb 761® is a patented Ginkgo biloba extract, developed by Schwabe Pharmaceuticals. It is widely regarded as the best researched phytomedicine worldwide and is available in more than 80 countries.

Schwabe Pharmaceuticals (Dr. Willmar Schwabe Arzneimittel GmbH & Co. KG) is a world leader in the development and production of plant-based pharmaceuticals (phytomedicines). The Group, with its headquarters in Karlsruhe, employs around 3,700 staff across five continents.

References:

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