

# Research identifies the herbal supplements that are effective in treating anxiety

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A systematic review of research into the use of nutritional supplements for the treatment of anxiety disorders has found strong evidence for the use of extracts of passionflower or kava and combinations of L-lysine and L-arginine. Researchers writing in BioMed Central's open access *Nutrition Journal* pooled the results of 24 studies involving a total of more than 2000 participants, showing that some nutritional and herbal supplements can be effective, without the risk of serious side effects.

The research was carried out by Shaheen Lakhan and Karen Vieira from the Global Neuroscience Initiative Foundation, a non-profit charity organization for the advancement of neurological and mental health patient welfare, education, and research, based in Los Angeles, USA. Lakhan said, "Our review and summary of the literature on herbal remedies and dietary supplements for [anxiety](#) should aid mental health practitioners in advising their patients and provide insight for future research in this field. We found mixed results - while passionflower or kava and L-lysine and L-arginine appeared to be effective, St John's Wort and magnesium supplements were not".

Of the studies included in the review, 21 were [randomized controlled trials](#). Of these, 15 showed positive effects from either a nutritional or herbal remedy and any reported side effects were mild to moderate. According to Lakhan, "For all three of the herbal supplements we reviewed, more research needs to be done to establish the most effective dosage and to determine whether this varies between different types of anxiety or anxiety-related disorders. Herbal medicines hold an important

place in the history of medicine as most of our current remedies, and the majority of those likely to be discovered in the future, will contain phytochemicals derived from plants".

**More information:** Nutritional and herbal supplements for anxiety and anxiety-related disorders: systematic review, Shaheen E Lakhan and Karen F Vieira, *Nutrition Journal* (in press), [www.nutritionj.com/](http://www.nutritionj.com/)

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