

Is St. John's Wort Effective As Popular Prescription Anti-Depressant

According to a recent clinical study, proprietary standardized extract of St. John Wort was proven to be as effective as common prescription antidepressant medications in reducing symptoms of depression. The study, which was published in the British Medical Journal in February of 2007, studied patients who took 900 mg per day of St. John Wort compared to those who took 20 mg per day of the pharmaceutical drug paroxetine. In some of the results St. John Wort had superior effects to those of the pharmaceutical antidepressant. This trial took place in various centers throughout Germany on patients between the ages of 18 and 70. The study lasted from 2000 and 2003, but the full treatment period for each patient lasted six weeks. Each of the patients was diagnosed with a moderate to severe level of major depression. This study tested 251 patients. Of these patients, those in the St. John Wort group experienced significantly better improvement according to the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (HAMD). Patients in the St. John Wort group also experienced a three-point greater decrease in the average HAMD total score as compared to those taking paroxetine.

When considering the safety aspects of the trial, St. John Wort produced a much smaller amount of side effects than the drug. Paroxetine patients reported 269 side effects compared to 172 reported by those taking St. John Wort. For both treatments, the most common side effect reported was stomach upset, which is fairly common to many clinical trials of this type.

The results demonstrated in this study are very similar to those of a previously published larger trial which took place in France. Conducted on 375 subjects, 900 mg per day of the same St. John Wort (WS 5570) were proven to have more benefit on depressed patients than a placebo.

St. John's Wort, which is traditionally used as an herbal remedy for melancholy and related depressive states, has been researched in numerous clinical trials. Many of which have demonstrated the overall effectiveness and safety of the extract. Twenty-three clinical trials published in the British Medical Journal in 1996 concluded that St. John Wort was a safe and effective way to treat mild to moderate forms of major depression. There is a dietary supplement product identical to the WS 5570 used in the clinical trials available in health food stores in the United States. Most St. John wort products are marketed to help create a positive mood. St. John Wort has recently received a great deal of public attention because it has the ability to interact with a great number of pharmaceutical drugs. It can lower their levels and effectiveness. The American Botanical Council (ABC) which is a non-profit organization that works to educate consumers, health care professionals, researchers, educators, industry and media on the safe and effective use of medicinal plants and is located in Austin, Texas, is responsible for publishing a great deal of educational information. According to ABC, consumers who are taking conventional drugs and who are considering St. John's Wort should first consult with a qualified healthcare practitioner in order to determine if the herb will interact properly with their drugs. St. John Wort should not be taken with anti-depression drugs.

About the Author

More information on st johns wort can be found at <http://vitanelonline.com/> where a large selection of herbs are available to browse and purchase.

Source: <http://www.healthcrazed.com>