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SCHIZOPHRENIA Factsheet

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What are herbal treatments for schizophrenia?

Herbal treatments can include traditional Chinese medicines, as well as more common herbal medicines such as ginkgo biloba or folate. Herbal treatments have been suggested as an adjunctive therapy, which is a supplementary treatment administered in conjunction with a patient's ongoing medications in an attempt to treat symptoms or improve functions that are not addressed by these medications alone.

What is the evidence for adjunctive herbal treatments?

High quality evidence shows adjunctive ginkgo biloba can improve symptoms, particularly when combined with chlorpromazine or haloperidol. Moderate to high quality evidence suggests adjunctive ginkgo may specifically be effective for the treatment of negative symptoms. Moderate to high quality evidence shows adjunctive folic acid can also improve negative symptoms, with fewer adverse effects than with adjunctive placebo.

Moderate to low quality evidence suggests adjunctive traditional Chinese medicines wendon decoction, hirudo seu whitmania, rhizome rheum palmatum, and xingshen may provide greater improvement in symptoms and better retention in treatment than antipsychotics alone. There may also be fewer side effects. Adjunctive suoquan wan may be more effective than the antimuscarinic, doxepin, for reducing clozapine-induced hypersalivation, and may result in less constipation.

Moderate to low quality evidence suggests a large benefit of adjunctive withania somnifera extract (ashwagandha) for improving symptoms.

Moderate to low quality evidence suggests adjunctive Vitamin B may provide a medium-sized improvement in overall symptoms compared with adjunctive placebo. No benefit of Vitamin E was found for mental health symptoms or tardive dyskinesia, or of probiotics for symptoms.

For more information see the technical table



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NeuRA (Neuroscience Research Australia) is one of the largest independent medical and clinical research institutes in Australia and an international leader in neurological research.

Diseases of the brain and nervous system pose the greatest health, economic and social burden of any disease group because they are chronic, debilitating and have no known cures.

Medical research is the cornerstone of efforts to advance the health and wellbeing of families and the community. Our dedicated scientists are focussed on transforming their research into significant and practical benefits for all patients.

While we hope you find this information useful, it is always important to discuss any questions about schizophrenia or its treatment with your doctor or other health care provider.

HOW YOUR SUPPORT HELPS

We are able to make significant advances due to the generosity of countless people. Your donation allows us to continue to work towards transforming lives. For information on how you can support our research, phone **1300 888 019** or make a secure donation at neura.edu.au/donate/schizophrenia.