Ashwagandha preserves the health of the aging brain

Ashwagandha is a medicinal plant used in India to treat a wide range of age-related disorders.53-63 Its most remarkable effect may involve its ability to preserve the health of the aging brain.

Ashwagandha offers myriad neuroprotective benefits. For example, one study showed that when given to mice, ashwagandha extract promotes memory retention, even when amnesia has been induced experimentally.60 Another study found that ashwagandha extract is capable of protecting the brains of laboratory rats against experimentally induced stroke.61

Ashwagandha constituents have also been shown to inhibit acetylcholinesterase (AChE), an enzyme responsible for breaking down acetylcholine, the neurotransmitter that is in dangerously short supply in the brains of Alzheimer’s disease sufferers.62 This AChE-blocking action is similar to that of prescription drugs such as Aricept® that are currently used to treat Alzheimer’s symptoms.

Exciting new research indicates that ashwagandha extract is capable of halting and even repairing damage to brain cells in an experimentally induced model of Alzheimer’s disease.63 Scientists in Japan induced Alzheimer’s-type brain cell atrophy and loss of synaptic function in mice by exposing them to the toxic protein Abeta, which has been implicated in the genesis of Alzheimer’s disease in humans. “Subsequent treatment with [a constituent of ashwagandha] induced significant regeneration of both axons and dendrites, in addition to the reconstruction of pre- and postsynapses in the neurons,” according to the scientists.63

Excerpt from Preserving and Restoring Brain Function By Dale Kiefer (Life Extension)

References:


63. Kuboyama T, Tohda C, Komatsu K. Neuritic regeneration and synaptic
reconstruction induced by withanolide A. Br J Pharmacol. 2005 Apr;144(7):961-71.

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