

THE USE OF GINKGO BILOBA IN NIGERIA FOR THE TREATMENT OF PATIENTS WITH PERIPHERAL VASCULAR DISEASES

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The Ginkgo biloba (GB) have been used by many herbalists in Nigerian traditional medicine as a remedy for vascular diseases (PVD). Clinical effects of GB include anti-thrombocytic activities and relaxes vascular smooth muscle through the release of nitric oxide (endothelium relaxation), improves venous tone, decreases high blood pressure (HBP). PVD is due largely to arterial affections which cause stenosis and ischaemia in the lower extremities. The available medications are few and usually have serious side effects. Taking GB can also reduce the risk of having to undergo surgery in patients with PVD.

This study the study was done at Praise Hospital, Rivers state in Nigeria and evaluation of its results was carried out in Kharkiv National Medical University, Kharkiv, Ukraine. Participants being older adults mean age $60 \pm 8,3$ years with claudication symptoms of PVD were enrolled in this study. 40 patients were treated with the GB extract. 25% patients had severe atherosclerosis of peripheral vessels, 25% other patients had HBP, 25% other patients also had diabetes mellitus type 2 (DM 2) while the remaining 25% had numerous venous pathologies as complications of other diseases (varicose veins, post-thrombophlebytic syndrome etc.). A test of pain-free walking distance among patients with PVD was conducted.

After 9 months GB-treatment produced an increase in treadmill walking time and flow-mediated vasodilation. The patients with severe atherosclerosis showed improvement in physical activity and pain reduction. The patients with HBP showed decrease of blood pressure (about 10-15 mm systolic and 5-10 mm diastolic) and sometimes normalization of HBP. The patients with DM 2 had detectable reduction of symptoms of vascular disturbances. The patients with venous pathologies noted improved blood flow and reduced vascular symptoms by ultrasound investigation. These data shows the use of GB as an effective therapy for PVD, although a longer duration of use should be considered for better results.

So, GB and its extracts have been used in Nigeria to treat all kinds of vasopathies. Combination therapy PVD using GB and with other anti-platelet agents or statins is to be recommended to enhance anti-atherosclerotic and anti-thrombotic efficacy without increasing side effects such as bleeding tendency. We can offer this method for treatment of patient with different vascular pathologies. The cheapness of GB makes it better for general usage among all socio-economic classes of society including the poorest people in society.