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Dong Quai Powdered Extract

Technical Background

- Dong quai (*Angelica sinensis*) is a member of the Umbelliferae plant family. It grows in the damp, cool, high mountain and plateau areas of China.¹
- Dong quai has been called the “ultimate herb” for women and is commonly found in many mixed herbal products developed specifically for use by women.
- For centuries, Dong quai has been used in traditional Chinese medicine to alleviate gynecological conditions, including dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation), amenorrhea (lack of menstruation), as a uterine smooth muscle relaxant, and to alleviate menopausal symptoms (such as hot flashes and vaginal dryness).^{2,3}
- Recent studies have found that Dong quai may have a therapeutic role in the treatment of brain tumors,^{4,5} as well as having anti-inflammatory effects.⁶ Dong quai also appears to have antioxidant activity⁷ and may play a role in preventing cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases.⁸

Sources and Recommended Intake

- No Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) has been established for Dong quai.
- Dong quai is not recommended for use during pregnancy and lactation.

Abstracts

Kupfersztain C, Rotem C, Fagot R, Kaplan B. The immediate effect of natural plant extract, Angelica sinensis and Matricaria chamomilla (Climex) for the treatment of hot flashes during menopause. A preliminary report. Clin Exp Obstet Gynecol. 2003;30(4):203-6. OBJECTIVE: To assess the efficiency of a medicinal herb extract preparation (Climex) for the treatment of menopausal symptoms. METHOD: In this placebo-controlled experiment on 55 postmenopausal women who complained of hot flashes and refused hormonal therapy. The women were randomly divided into two groups, one to receive Climex (5 chewable tablets daily between meals) and the other group to receive a placebo; both groups would take the tablets for 12 weeks. The women were asked to complete a daily structured (Kupperman) questionnaire assessing the frequency and intensity of menopausal symptoms, starting one week prior to treatment to the completion of the study. All women underwent hormone profile measurements and transvaginal ultrasonography evaluation before and after treatment. RESULTS: There was a significant difference between the study group and the control group in the decrease in number and intensity of hot flashes from baseline to completion of treatment (90-96% vs 15-25%, $p < 0.001$). In the study group, a response was already noted during the first month of treatment (68% +/- 2% reduction of hot flashes during the day and 74% +/- 4% during the night). There was also a marked alleviation of sleep disturbances and fatigue. CONCLUSIONS: Treatment with Climex seems to be effective for menopausal symptoms without apparent major adverse effects. This hormone-free preparation may be used as an important modality for menopausal women with contraindications for hormone replacement therapy.

References

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- ⁴ Tsai NM, Lin SZ, Lee CC, Chen SP, Su HC, Chang WL, Harn HJ. The antitumor effects of *Angelica sinensis* on malignant brain tumors *in vitro* and *in vivo*. *Clin Cancer Res.* 2005 May 1;11(9):3475-84.
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- ⁶ Ozaki Y. Antiinflammatory effect of tetramethylpyrazine and ferulic acid. *Chem Pharm Bull* 1992 Apr; 40(4):954-6
- ⁷ Wu SJ, Ng LT, Lin CC. Antioxidant activities of some common ingredients of traditional chinese medicine, *Angelica sinensis*, *Lycium barbarum* and *Poria cocos*. *Phytother Res.* 2004 Dec;18(12):1008-12.
- ⁸ Hou YZ, Zhao GR, Yang J, Yuan YJ, Zhu GG, Hiltunen R. Protective effect of *Ligusticum chuanxiong* and *Angelica sinensis* on endothelial cell damage induced by hydrogen peroxide. *Life Sci.* 2004 Aug 20;75(14):1775-86.