

EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF A FOOD SUPPLEMENT ON SELF-ESTEEM, PHYSICAL EFFICIENCY AND INFECTIONS

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Introduction

According to WHO, immunomodulators should have rapid biological degrading, they should not cause any collateral effects and should exercise moderately immunostimulant effects: these features can also be found in extracts of Equinacea, Uncaria, Tabebuia, Ginseng, Eleuterococcus, Serenoa, Anise, Mallow, Damiana and Liquorice.

Materials and methods

The study was conducted on a double-blind basis and involved 50 women whose ages ranged between 24 and 60, of whom 25 had placebo (PL) and 25 the active principle under observation (PA - 50 ml diluted in 1 litre of water which was to be drunk during the day). A questionnaire was distributed at the beginning of the observation which was validated to international standards in order to assess the state of physical efficiency and the degree of self-esteem in the subjects, the frequency of occurrence of infections and, as a confounding factor, the state of aesthetic imperfections – if any (McAuley, 1994). After 75 days, the subjects were given the questionnaire once again in order to evaluate any variations.

Results

There was a drop-out rate of 5 subjects in group PA and 5 in group PL. There was a significant increase ($p < 0,05$) in physical efficiency and in the degree of self-esteem and a significant decrease ($p < 0,05$) in the occurrence of infections. No significant results were found in the aesthetic imperfections taken into consideration.

Conclusions

From the preliminary data it seems we can state that the regular use of the extract can reduce the frequency of colds and induce a general state of wellness. There seem to be no significant effects on aesthetic imperfections related to cellulite if we exclude water retention and a sense of heaviness. From the data collected, it is evident that the regular use of this product causes a greater sensation of wellness, increases physical self-esteem and enhances resistance to pathogenic agents (one subject reported the resolution and disappearance of an annoying herpes labialis). One might suppose that the use of the extract is beneficial in subjects exposed to strong stress due to work or to training as an aid to the immune system.

Results of the evaluation of the effects on colds, influenza and malaise

Cold BM vs PL		Bouts of flu BM vs PL		Malaise BM vs PL	
BM	PL	BM	PL	BM	PL
from 3.5 a 0.8	from 4.0a 2.8	from 1.5 a 0.3	from 1.3 a 0.8	from 4.8 a 2.5	from 4.6 a 3