

Curcuma inhibits behavioural and psychological problems in Alzheimer's disease

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Clinical research has shown that Curcuma longa can significantly reduce the secondary symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. In the Netherlands approximately 250,000 people suffer from this disease. Treatment is unfortunately beyond the scope of medical science. That is why clinical research often focuses on inhibiting the effects and alleviating secondary symptoms, including hallucinations, aggression, passivity, depression and behavioural disorders. Used as a(n) (adjuvant) therapy, curcuma longa can provide relief.

In Alzheimer's disease, the processing of information is increasingly disrupted and memory impairment continues to worsen. As well as the unpleasant consequences for the patient and his or her family, care of Alzheimer's patients is also difficult for health care workers. That is partially because of the incidental behavioural and psychological problems. These occur in 50 to 90 percent of all patients with Alzheimer's.

Design of the study

Based on a score list (NPI-Q), the seriousness of the secondary symptoms was measured in three hospital patients suffering from very serious Alzheimer's disease. The NPI-Q is an accurate clinical instrument for evaluating the effect of treatment on the symptoms of Alzheimer's. This study also determined the burden on the carers. The list was completed before, during and after treatment with Curcuma longa.

No secondary symptoms

One of the patients was an 83 year old lady, with steadily increasing dementia.

"She wandered around her house and was incontinent, apathetic, anxious, aggressive and irritable. The symptoms reduced after administering 764 mg of Curcuma longa (100 mg of curcumin) for 12 weeks. The burden on the carers also decreased. After she had taken Curcuma longa for more than a year, she started to recognise her family again."

According to the researchers, she now displays no significant secondary symptoms of Alzheimer's disease. Her score list is below in figure 1. Comparable results were achieved in the other patients.

Usual treatment, numerous side effects

Medicines do, of course, exist for palliative care in (patients with) Alzheimer's disease. Acetyl-



cholinesterase inhibitors, memantine and antipsychotic drugs are commonly prescribed. However, especially the antipsychotic drugs have numerous side effects, including drowsiness and movement disorders. This reduces the quality of life. To the contrary, no side effects were observed during the study with Curcuma longa.

Curcuma longa effective and safe

The researchers concluded that the treatment of Alzheimer's with Curcuma longa is safer than with other pharmacological interventions. Furthermore, lower doses of antipsychotic drugs can be prescribed for the treatment of Alzheimer's.

"We came to the conclusion that, in addition to the usual treatment, Curcuma longa improves the quality of life and the routine activities of daily living of patients. Furthermore, it reduces the burden on carers. This is the first case report that shows that Curcuma longa is an effective and safe medicine for the treatment of the secondary symptoms of Alzheimer's."

For more scientific information about Curcuma longa, please read our [monograph](#).

Effects of turmeric on Alzheimer's disease with behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia, Hishikawa N, Takahashi Y, et al, Ayu, 2012 Oct; 33(4): 499-504.

Symptoms	Before treatment		After treatment	
	Acuity of symptoms	Burden of caregivers	Acuity of symptoms	Burden of caregivers
Delusions	0	-	0	-
Hallucinations	0	-	0	-
Agitation	2	3	0	-
Depression	0	-	0	-
Anxiety	2	1	0	-
Euphoria	0	-	0	-
Apathy	3	1	0	-
Disinhibition	0	-	0	-
Irritability	2	2	0	1
Aberrant motor activity	0	-	0	-
Nocturnal aberrant activity	0	-	0	-
Prandial aberrant activity	0	-	0	-
Total score	9	7	0	1

Acuity of symptoms on a 4-point scale: 0, none; 1, Mild; 2, Moderate; severe, 3. Burden of caregivers on a 6-point scale, Not at all distressing; 1, minimally distressing; 2, Mildly distressing; 3, Moderately distressing; 4, Severely distressing; 5, extremely distressing.

Figure 1. Change in NPI-Q scores before and after the treatment of an Alzheimer's patient using Curcuma longa