



# Ashwagandha Insights

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## ASHWAGANDHA & STRESS



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# Reducing Stress, Restoring Balance with Ashwagandha

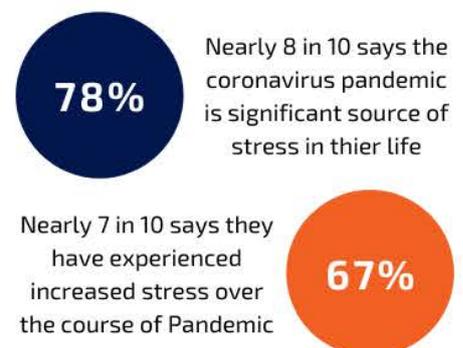
The more stressed we are, the more imbalanced we become and the less wellbeing we experience. A combination of myriad internal and external circumstances is forcing us to find better ways of being happy and to effectively and calmly manage our lives. There is a constant need to discover non-conventional methods of healthcare. Adaptogens have rightly found a “sweet spot” in the minds and hearts of the “informed customers.” When we talk about adaptogens, the herb that most frequently comes to mind is Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*). It is one of the most revered plants within the Ayurvedic system of medicine and is one of the most sought-after adaptogens that offers benefits in key areas from stress, anxiety, fatigue, and weight management.



## How Stressful is Stress?

Stress is a common occurrence in everyday life, especially today. With the prevalence of fast-paced life, fierce competition, the bombardment of messaging on various digital devices, and constant social relations all defining the norm, the levels of stressors affecting an average person have increased unabated. A sharp uptick year on year over the last decade in the number of reported cases of stress and anxiety, regardless of age, gender, or social background has been seen and reported.

The American Psychological Association (APA) has performed several surveys in recent years to gauge the levels of national stress. In 2018, the APA Stress in America poll showed that nearly 74% of adults experienced at least one symptom of stress, 45% had stress-induced impaired sleep, and 37% felt the need to eat too much or eat unhealthily<sup>1</sup>. The situation has worsened somewhat during the pandemic. In 2020, the APA’s Stress in America report found that nearly 8 in 10 adults (78%) say the coronavirus pandemic is a significant source of stress in their life. And, 2 in 3 adults (67%) say they have experienced increased stress over the course of the pandemic<sup>2</sup>.



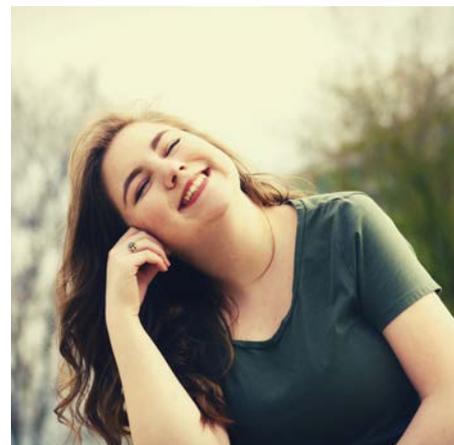


## How Ashwagandha Root Addresses Modern Stress

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Ashwagandha is one of the most revered adaptogens, used for over five millennia to help support the body's natural balance. Ashwagandha embodies the very essence of the preventative and curative approach in Ayurveda. The name Ashwagandha is from the Sanskrit language and is a combination of the word ashva meaning "horse," and gandha, meaning "smell;" the root has a strong aroma that is described as horse-like.

The Ayurvedic health practitioner Vaidya R. K. Mishra states that the translation can be taken literally, or that it could be interpreted to mean "horse essence" and that ashwagandha provides the strength, character, essence, or stamina of a horse. In Latin, the species name *somnifera* means "sleep inducer," referring to the use of Ashwagandha as a sedative and nervine. Ashwagandha is referred to as the "Prince of Herbs" in Ayurveda because it has an impressively broad range of therapeutic effects. Historically, the root is known to be the most vital part of the plant, cherished by ancient texts and Ayurvedic practitioners<sup>3</sup>.



Historically, ashwagandha has been used as a *Rasayana*, to enhance vitality in young children, to promote physical and mental health, boost immunity, and promote graceful aging. Modern research and clinical trials being conducted help in confirming the traditional therapeutic health benefits of ashwagandha.

Ixoreal Biomed has been a pioneer in setting the industry benchmark for ashwagandha. Through its only ingredient, KSM-66 Ashwagandha Root Extract that has been evaluated in 24 gold standard human clinical trials, the company has globally established Ashwagandha as a credible and go-to botanical for general wellbeing.

# Key findings of KSM-66 in human clinical studies showing value for relieving stress and related conditions

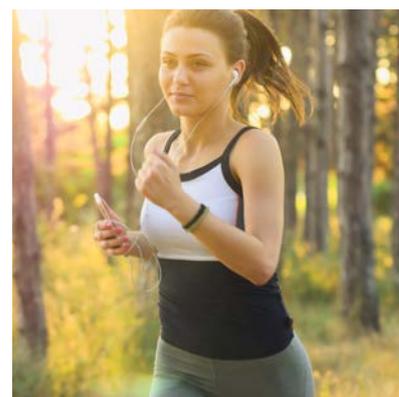
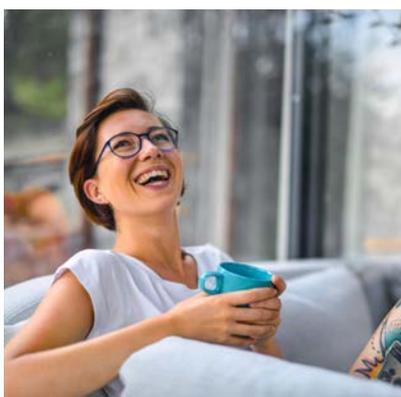
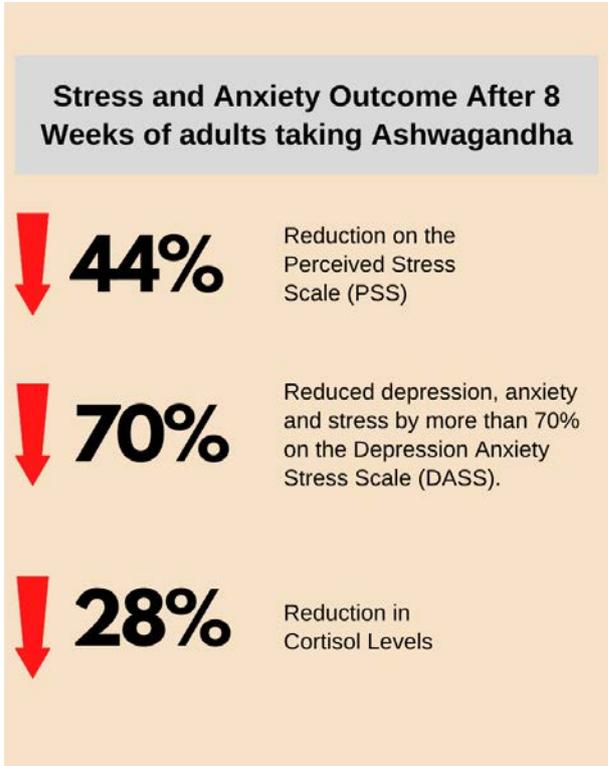
In this paper, we summarize the key findings of KSM-66 in human clinical studies showing value for relieving stress and related conditions (eg, anxiety, stress eating, and sleep impairment).

## 1 Stress and Anxiety

When subjected to stress, the body releases cortisol, a hormone regulated by the hypothalamus-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis to help the body react properly. As an adaptogen, ashwagandha is believed to help the HPA axis decelerate, thereby reducing the increased levels of serum cortisol and return the body to homeostasis. Ashwagandha has a GABA-mimetic effect, that reduces the over-excitation of neurons, thereby producing calmness, reducing stress and anxiety.

Research published in *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine* examined the effects of KSM-66 ashwagandha supplementation (600mg/day) for eight weeks and found remarkable results in the reduction of stress and subjective measures of stress.

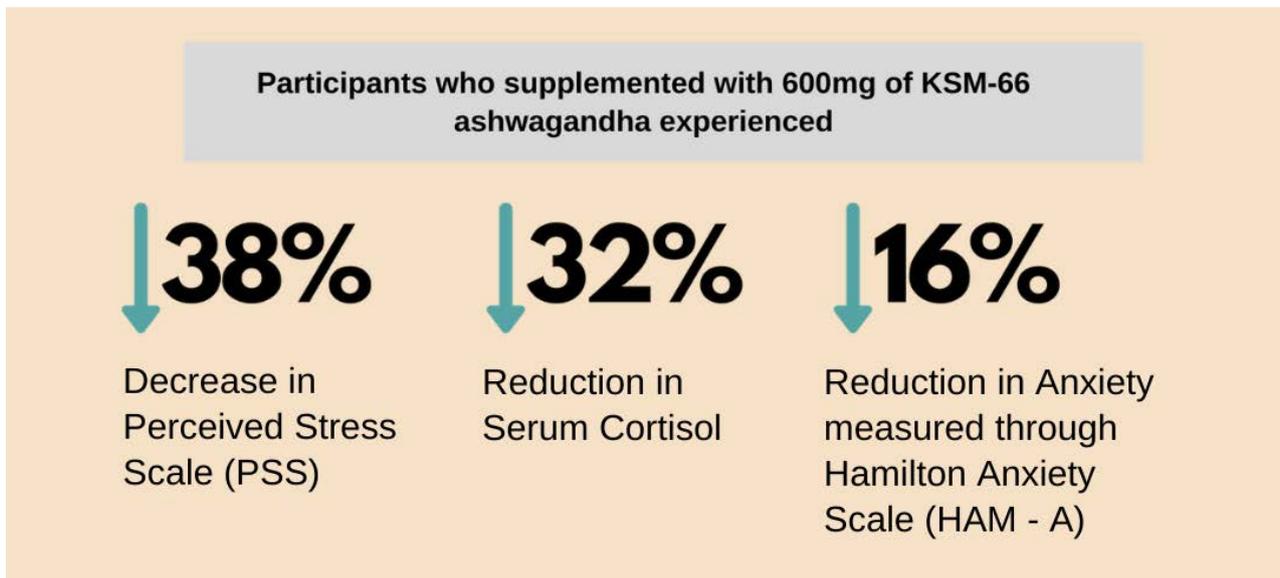
This randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study included 64 participants with a history of chronic stress. At the study's end, those in the KSM-66 group experienced a 28% reduction in cortisol levels. Also, ashwagandha produced a 44% reduction on the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), and reduced depression, anxiety and stress by more than 70% on the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS)<sup>4</sup>.



## 2 Stress and Sleep

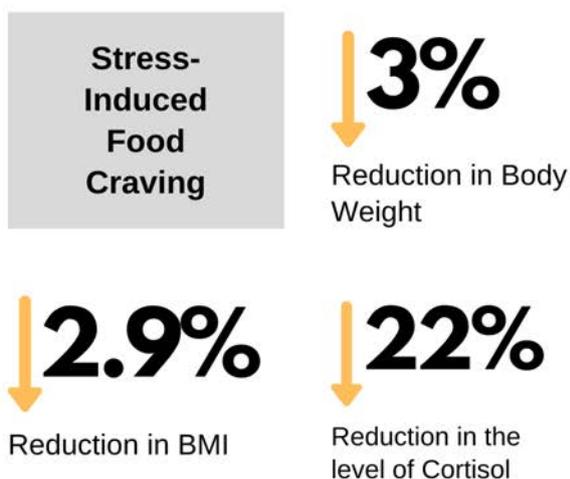
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In another study published in *Cureus*, researchers examined the effect of KSM-66 Ashwagandha supplementation on reducing stress and anxiety over 8 weeks. The randomized, prospective, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical study involved 60 healthy adults between the ages of 18 and 55. The study found that participants who supplemented with 600mg of KSM-66 ashwagandha experienced a 38% decrease in Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), 32% reduction in serum cortisol and a 16% reduction in anxiety measured through Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAM-A).<sup>5</sup>



## 3 Stress-induced Food Cravings

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Chronic stress is also closely linked to obesity and stress-related eating disorders. One study published in *Evidence-Based Complementary & Alternative Medicine* found that the consumption of KSM-66 ashwagandha (600mg/day) resulted in improved scores on the perceived stress scale, positively affected serum cortisol, body mass index (BMI), and body weight.



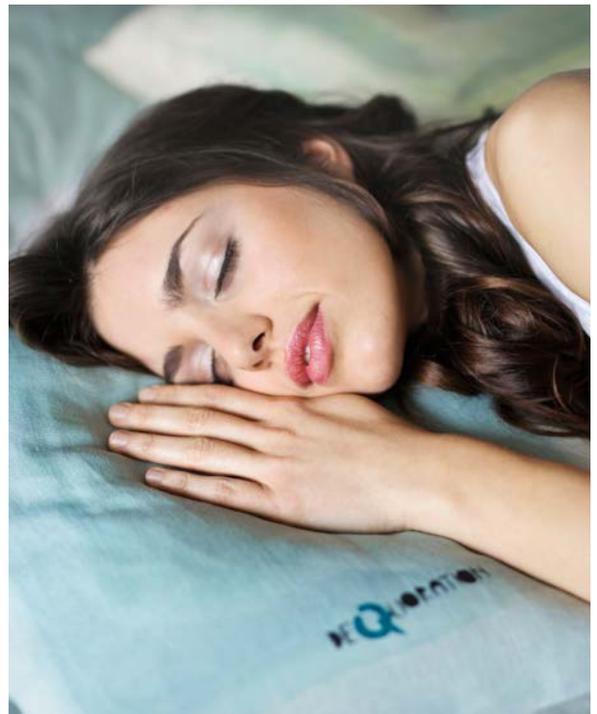
The participants experienced a 22.2% reduction in the levels of cortisol over the course of the study. KSM-66 ashwagandha supplementation resulted in a 3.0% and 2.9% reduction in body weight and BMI, respectively. In this study, supplementation with ashwagandha caused a significant reduction in food cravings. Based on these results, ashwagandha may be said to have a positive impact on eating behavior and help in weight management.<sup>6</sup>

## 4 Anxiety and Sleep

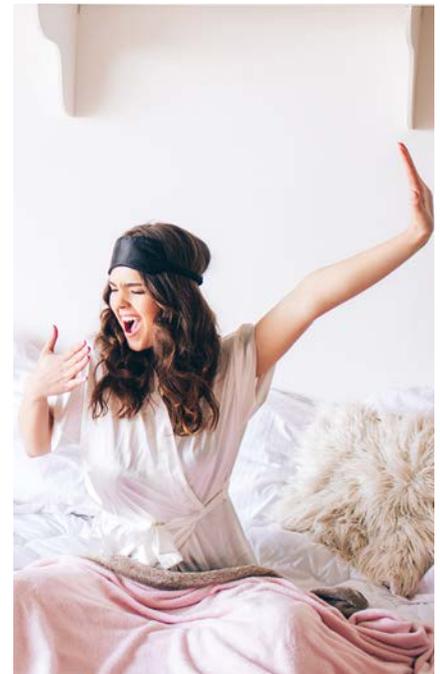
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Stress and anxiety impact sleep quality and often lead to insomnia. In the same manner, lack of proper rest and sleep can contribute to stress. Stress and sleep problems share a reciprocal relationship and addressing one issue can often lead to an improvement in the other.

A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study published in *Cureus*, demonstrated that sleep challenged subjects who consumed 300 mg of KSM-66 ashwagandha twice daily (600mg total) for 10 weeks showed a significantly shorter time falling asleep, improvement in sleep efficiency and sleep quality, and also significant calming effects, reduced nervousness compared to those consuming placebo. The KSM-66 participants also experienced a statistically significant 22% reduction in anxiety.<sup>7</sup>



An oft-quoted study published in the *Journal of Ethnopharmacology* examined the effects of supplementation with KSM-66 ashwagandha in both healthy and insomniac participants (n=80). This double-blind, randomized, parallel-group, placebo-controlled trial, revealed that ashwagandha supplementation showed a significant improvement in sleep parameters and produced a 29% decrease in the HAM-A scores for insomnia subjects thus showing an overall improvement in their quality of life (HAM-A is a rating scale of anxiety symptom severity).<sup>8</sup>



## 5 Anxiety and Quality of Life in Older Individuals

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A study on published in *Cureus* evaluated the effect of KSM-66 Ashwagandha on elderly participants. In this randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial, the participants aged 65 to 80 received 600 mg/day of ashwagandha for 12 weeks. Researchers found that those in the KSM-66 group had significant improvements in quality of sleep, quality of life, and mental alertness.<sup>9</sup>

These study summaries demonstrate that at only 600 mg daily, KSM-66 Ashwagandha Root Extract has compelling ability to help multiple millions of people worldwide to reduce stress, reduce anxiety, banish stress-induced cravings, and to achieve better sleep.



## Client Speaks :

When we decided to start to work with ashwagandha, KSM-66 was the obvious choice for us. It was an easy decision that was based on the passion, the quality, and the environmental responsibility that Ixoreal shows in everything they do. A passion that has led to an impressive number of well-conducted clinical studies, as well as certificates for purity, traceability, quality, and sustainability, is unsurpassed. Ixoreal Biomed demonstrates total credibility, safety, and efficacy. We have now been working with KSM-66 since 2017 and launched in three countries – Sweden, Norway, and Finland – with great success.



The full-spectrum extract manufactured with Green Chemistry is also superior to other extracts since it contains both water and fat-soluble actives – which is the reason for its unbeaten efficacy. A big advantage is an accuracy under which KSM-66 ashwagandha is produced which makes it flow very well in the capsulation process.

Over the years we have been working with the most well-known, clinically documented adaptogens. But we have never worked with an extract that has given us so much positive feedback from retailers and consumers. And the reason is of course – that KSM-66 works. It does reduce stress, it does make people feel calmer but energetic and it does improve sleep and even sexual urge. KSM-66 also adds one more important dimension – Ixoreal is a great company to work with and admirably provides a constant flow of new clinical studies. This means that there is always a fresh story to tell and that KSM-66 always feels new and relevant. Plus, that credibility constantly increases which is important for the consumers, the authorities, and the professional users. KSM-66 is today the adaptogen leader in Sweden, Finland, and Norway - with constant increasing sales.



Tom & Maibritt Johnsson - Founders, Medicine Garden



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