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## A double-blind, placebo-controlled investigation of the effects of *Passiflora incarnata* (passionflower) herbal tea on subjective sleep quality.

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### Abstract

*Passiflora incarnata* is a traditional herbal sedative, anxiolytic and a popular sleep aid used for the treatment of sleep disturbance.

Several controlled experiments have demonstrated enhanced sleep in laboratory animals, but clinical trials in humans are lacking. The aim of the present study was to investigate the efficacy of *Passiflora incarnata* herbal tea on human sleep, as measured using sleep diaries validated by polysomnography (PSG). This study featured a double-blind, placebo-controlled, repeated-measures design with a counterbalanced order of treatments (passionflower vs placebo tea), separated by a 1 week 'washout' period. Forty-one participants (18-35 years) were exposed to each treatment for a week, whereby they consumed a cup of the tea and filled out a sleep diary for 7 days, and completed Spielberger's state-trait anxiety inventory on the seventh morning. Ten participants also underwent overnight PSG on the last night of each treatment period. Of six sleep-diary measures analysed, sleep quality showed a significantly better rating for passionflower compared with placebo ( $t(40)=2.70$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). These initial findings suggest that the consumption of a low dose of *Passiflora incarnata*, in the form of tea, yields short-term subjective sleep benefits for healthy adults with mild fluctuations in sleep quality.

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