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## Formulations of dietary supplements and herbal extracts for relaxation and anxiolytic action: Relarian.

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### Author information

### Abstract

Dietary supplements are widely used for desired effects on memory, insomnia, mood and anxiety. This review focuses on supplements which have anxiolytic or mild relaxation properties and enhance mood. For example, Kava (*Piper methysticum*) is reported to have anxiolytic actions and to reduce tension through skeletal muscle relaxation. Dried passion flower (genus *Passiflora*) is reported to reduce insomnia and hysteria. Skullcap (genus *Scutellaria*), hops (*Humulus lupulus*), lemon balm (*Melissa officinalis*) and Valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) root are all herbs reported as anxiolytic calming agents. Further, extracts of *Magnolia* and *Phellodendron* bark are mild sedatives. Supplements such as gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), theanine, tryptophan and 5-hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP) are reported to promote relaxation. In general, these supplements appear to act as GABA receptor agonists or to boost GABA levels, although Kava inhibits both norepinephrine uptake and sodium and potassium channels and 5-HTP may act through elevation of serotonin. While questions remain in the literature regarding the medicinal value of these supplements in treating mood and anxiety disorders, based on cellular and animal studies as well as human clinical trials the literature supports a role for these preparations as useful alternatives in the management of the stress and anxiety of everyday life.

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