Melissa officinalis effect on female sexual dysfunction: a double blind, randomized clinical trial

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Background and objectives: Female sexual dysfunction is a very common health problem that affects 25-65% of women. Melissa officinalis or lemon balm (Lamiaceae) has been reported in folk medicine for treatment of nervous debility, so this study was designed to evaluate the efficacy of M. officinalis to improve female libido. Methods: Eighty nine eligible women with decreased sexual desire were randomly divided into two groups and consumed four 500 mg capsules of M. officinalis or placebo for 4 weeks. Medication was prepared from dried aqueous extract of M. officinalis (standardized as 3.32±0.02 mg gallic acid/g and 1.8±0.003 mg rutin/g). Changes in female sexual function index (FSFI) questionnaire scores were evaluated for the two groups. Results: Patients in M. officinalis group experienced significant improvement in lubrication (p<0.005), sexual desire, arousal, orgasm, satisfaction, pain, FSFI total score and also willingness to continue treatment (p<0.001) compared to the placebo group. Conclusion: This study showed that M. officinalis can be used as a safe and effective herbal remedy to improve sexual dysfunction in women.

Keywords: female sexual dysfunction, libido, Melissa officinalis, women