



New results in dementia research: Major study shows that long-term intake of *Ginkgo biloba* special extract EGb 761[®] protects against Alzheimer's disease

KARLSRUHE, Germany, 22 June 2010. For the very first time, a medicine has been shown to protect against the development of Alzheimer's disease. French scientists were able to demonstrate that taking 240 mg of Ginkgo extract EGb 761[®] per day regularly over a period of at least 4 years can cut the risk of developing Alzheimer's disease by nearly 50%.

"The results of the GuidAge study are remarkable", according to Prof. Michael Habs, Managing Director at Dr. Willmar Schwabe GmbH & Co. KG, Karlsruhe, producers of EGb 761[®] (Tebonin[®], pharmacy only). "It is the first time ever that a protective effect against Alzheimer's disease has been demonstrated for a medicine. The multifaceted effects of the plant extract appear to positively influence the complex developmental processes of dementia."

The GuidAge study was a large-scale study, in which 2854 elderly people with memory complaints were randomly assigned to receive either 240 mg/day of the patented Ginkgo special extract or a placebo for five years. Of those subjects taking the study medication for at least 4 years 29 out of 966 (3.0 %) taking placebo developed Alzheimer's disease; in contrast only 15 out of 947 (1.6 %) treated with EGb 761[®] developed the disease (p=0.03) ([Press release IPSEN](#), June 22, 2010). The result of this prospectively planned analysis shows that the Ginkgo special extract developed by Dr. Willmar Schwabe Pharmaceuticals can lower the risk of dementia by 47 %.

The brain pathology that leads to overt Alzheimer's disease develops over the course of many years. It is therefore not surprising that those study participants who developed dementia early in the study gained less protective benefit from EGb 761[®] treatment, because they already had the disease. When these subjects as well as those who left the study prematurely, i.e. all study participants were included in the analysis, the overall treatment effect was still detectable, although not statistically significant.

The results were commented on as follows by Prof. Ralf Ihl, University of Duesseldorf and director of the Department of Geriatric Psychiatry, Maria-Hilf Hospital, Krefeld: „There have been hints that Ginkgo biloba may exert a preventive effect. With the findings of this study we have first scientifically verifiable results suggesting that the extract may be useful for preventing the development of Alzheimer’s disease.“

The result of the GuidAge study agrees with the findings of two earlier cohort studies carried out in France, which also suggested a protective effect of EGb 761[®]. A study funded by the US *National Institute on Aging* as well found a dementia-protective effect in those subjects, who had taken their medication regularly. In another US study, a protective effect was not found, however. But towards the end of this study, the medicine was actually only taken by little more than half of the subjects. The results of the GuidAge study now again confirm the importance of a regular and long enough intake of 240 mg EGb 761[®] per day: A very high proportion of 93% of the participants took their medication regularly during the whole treatment period. Once again the excellent long-term safety profile of EGb 761[®] was confirmed.

Animal models also showed that EGb 761[®] intervenes in several of the processes decisive to the development of Alzheimer’s disease: the formation of harmful protein-compounds (so-called β -amyloid) is inhibited and the nerve cell damage caused by these as well as by ageing processes reduced so that energy generation in the nerve cells can be maintained. The patented special extract EGb 761[®] contains a particularly high proportion of plant substances that are unique to Ginkgo, ginkgolides and bilobalide, and that are especially important for the protection of nerve cells.

The efficacy of EGb 761[®] in the treatment of dementia diseases has been confirmed recently in several meta-analyses of available studies. EGb 761[®] can also improve cognitive performance in people who do not yet show significant impairment. In summarizing the study results, Dr. Reiner Kaschel, reader in clinical neuropsychology at the University of Osnabruck, concluded: “Meta-analyses of the data by independent scientists consistently substantiate the efficacy of EGb 761[®] at the onset of cognitive decline.”

[Tebonin[®]](#) is an phytopharmaceutical for the treatment of decreasing mental capacity. It contains the patented Ginkgo special extract EGb 761[®], developed and manufactured by [Dr. Willmar Schwabe GmbH & Co. KG](#), Karlsruhe. EGb 761[®] is widely recognized as the best researched phytopharmaceutical world-wide and is available in more than 80 countries.

Dr. Willmar Schwabe Pharmaceuticals is a world leader in the development and production of plant-based pharmaceuticals. The Group, with its headquarters in Karlsruhe, employs around 3,700 staff across five continents.

Contact:

Prof. Dr. med. Michael Habs

Dr. Willmar Schwabe GmbH & Co. KG

Willmar-Schwabe-Str. 4

76227 Karlsruhe

Phone: +49 (0)721-40 05-498

Fax: +49 (0)721-40 05-500

Michael.Habs@schwabe.de

<http://www.schwabe.de>