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A randomized double-blind placebo-controlled study evaluating the role of saffron in treatment of fluoxetine-induced sexual dysfunction in women

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Abstract

Some previous experimental and human studies have shown that saffron (*Crocus sativus L.*) has aphrodisiac effects. The aim of the present study was to assess the safety and efficacy of saffron on selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor-induced sexual dysfunction in women. Thirty-eight married women with major depression who were stabilized on fluoxetine 40 mg/day for a minimum of 6 weeks and had experienced subjective feeling of sexual dysfunction were included in the present randomized double-blind placebo-controlled study. Patients were randomly assigned to saffron (30 mg/daily) or placebo for 4 weeks. Sexual function measurement was performed at baseline, week 2, and week 4 using the Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI) questionnaire. All side effects were systematically recorded. Thirty-four women had at least one post-baseline measurement and completed the study. Two-factor repeated measure analysis of variance showed significant effect of time treatment interaction [Greenhouse–Geisser's corrected: $F(1.580, 50.567) = 5.366$, $p = 0.012$] and treatment for FSFI total score [$F(1, 32) = 4.243$, $p = 0.048$]. After 4 weeks, patients in the saffron group had experienced significant improvement in total FSFI ($p < 0.001$), arousal ($p = 0.028$), lubrication ($p = 0.035$), and pain ($p = 0.016$) domains of FSFI but not in desire ($p = 0.196$), satisfaction ($p = 0.206$), and orgasm ($p = 0.354$) domains. Frequency of side effects was similar between the two groups. According to our findings saffron seems to be effective to improve some of the fluoxetine-induced sexual problems including arousal, lubrication, and pain.

Biography

Sepideh Saroukhani has completed her MD at the age of 27 years from Qazvin University of Medical Sciences. She was interested in psychiatry and psychology during her student ship. Therefore, she has focus on these fields in her research activities and has published papers related to both experimental and human studies in reputed journals.

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