

The Moss Nutrition Digest

Timely Tidbits to Support Your Practice

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Magnolia Bark, CB Receptors & Relaxation

In recent years, anxiety disorders are estimated to affect between 10% and 30% of the general population. Pharmaceutical treatments are ubiquitous, their many unwanted side effects well known. Nutritional, nutraceutical and botanical support is also available to help promote natural stress reduction and healthy mood maintenance.

One remedy used since ancient times to help nurture the development of calm, relaxed mood states comes from the bark of the beautiful magnolia tree. Known as Houpu in traditional Chinese medicine, *Magnolia officinalis* bark has been employed for centuries to help treat anxiety and depression along with a wide variety of non-mood related conditions—from headaches and sinus congestion to GI disturbances and more.

Like most medicinal plants, magnolia bark contains numerous bioactive compounds. Among these, the most well-studied include the polyphenols *honokiol* and *magnolol*. These two lignans have been studied for their ability to interact with GABA-A receptors, helping to decrease stress, quell anxiety, and promote restful sleep. (GABA itself is the major inhibitory neurotransmitter in the brain, recognized for helping to slow down brain activity and for its sedative properties.)

In addition to interacting with GABA-A receptors, magnolol and honokiol appear to interact with the cannabinoid receptors CB-1 and CB-2, found in the central and peripheral nervous system. Research suggests honokiol may serve as a CB-1 agonist and a CB-2 antagonist, while magnolol shows activity as a CB-2 agonist with no observed effect on CB-1 to date. Honokiol and magnolol are also noted for providing antioxidant, anti-microbial and cell-protective activity.

New animal research on mood, published in the *Journal of Pharmacy and Pharmacology*, involved treating animals with a honokiol-rich magnolia bark extract and having them perform a variety of mood-related behavioral tests to evaluate perceived levels of anxiety and depression. Administration of the magnolia bark extract was found to produce a selective, anxiety reducing effect. The involvement of CB1 receptors was confirmed via the co-administration of AM251, a synthetic CB1 antagonist. The authors concluded that honokiol-enhanced *Magnolia officinalis* bark extract shows promise as an effective and safe anxiolytic with neuroprotective activity.

REFERENCES

1. Borgonetti V et al. A honokiol-enriched *Magnolia officinalis* Rehder & E.H. Wilson. bark extract possesses anxiolytic-like activity with neuroprotective effect through the modulation of CB1 receptor. *J Pharm Pharmacol*. 2021 May 5:rgab067.
2. Viktor Rempel et al. Magnolia Extract, Magnolol, and Metabolites: Activation of Cannabinoid CB2 Receptors and Blockade of the Related GPR55. *ACS Med Chem Lett*. 2012 Nov 14;4(1):41-5.

Magnolia Select™ is a highly concentrated, extract of *Magnolia officinalis* bark with a 90% honokiol + magnolol content, provided in 200 mg vegetarian capsules. The recommend dose is 1 capsule per day. **Magnolia Select™** may cause drowsiness and should not be taken prior to operating a motor vehicle, nor is it recommended for use during pregnancy.