



Ashwagandha (*Withania Somnifera*) and Its Role in Promoting Well-Being: An Integrative Review

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ABSTRACT

Ayurveda, the ancient Indian system of holistic medicine, recognizes *Ashwagandha* (*Withania somnifera* Dunal) as a premier *Rasayana* herb revered for promoting strength (*bala*), vitality, longevity, and overall well-being. Traditionally valued for its rejuvenating, adaptogenic, and restorative properties, *Ashwagandha* has been widely prescribed for stress-related disorders, fatigue, anxiety, and neurodegenerative conditions. Classical Ayurvedic texts describe it as *Balya*, *Medhya*, and *Vatahara*, reflecting its capacity to nourish both the body and mind. In recent decades, modern scientific research has substantiated many of these traditional claims, identifying diverse pharmacological activities including anti-stress, neuroprotective, immunomodulatory, anti-inflammatory, and antioxidant effects. These actions are attributed to its rich phytochemical profile comprising withanolides, alkaloids, and sitoindosides. This review explores *Ashwagandha* from both Ayurvedic and contemporary biomedical perspectives, highlighting its *Rasapanchaka*, phytochemistry, pharmacodynamic mechanisms, and clinical efficacy. Modern investigations demonstrate its ability to regulate the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis, lower cortisol levels, enhance cognition, and improve quality of life. Integrating Ayurvedic principles with modern pharmacological evidence underscores *Ashwagandha*'s potential as a natural adaptogen capable of promoting resilience, homeostasis, and psycho-physical balance. Bridging the wisdom of Ayurveda with contemporary biomedical science, *Ashwagandha* exemplifies the evolving model of Integrative Medicine, offering a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to enhancing human well-being.

Keywords: Ashwagandha, *Withania somnifera*, Rasayana, Adaptogen, Integrative medicine, Stress, Well-being

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