

Study on use of Ashwagandha in covid recovery

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In news- Recently, the UK's London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) has entered into an agreement with the ministry of Ayush to conduct this study on Ashwagandha's impact on Covid recovery.

Key updates-

- As per agreement, Ashwagandha will be administered to 2,000 randomly selected people in Leicester, Birmingham and London to find out whether this herb helps in faster recovery from Covid-19.
- **All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA)**, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Ayush, and the LSHTM have signed this Memorandum of Understanding.
- Though Ayush Ministry conducted research on Ashwagandha, this is the **first time the ministry has tied up with a foreign institution to investigate Ashwagandha's properties relating to Covid recovery.**
- While Ashwagandha is available in India in juice, tablet and powder format as well, the participants in the trial will be given Ashwagandha tablets.
- For three months, one group of 1,000 participants will be administered Ashwagandha (AG) tablets while the second group of 1,000 participants will be assigned a placebo, which is indistinguishable from AG in looks and taste.
- Both patients and the doctors will be unaware of the group's treatment in a double-blind trial.

About Ashwagandha-

- Ashwagandha (*Withania somnifera*) is commonly **known as 'Indian winter cherry'** and is known for its energy-

boosting, stress-busting properties.

- Ashwagandha in Sanskrit means 'smell of the horse', which refers to both its unique smell and ability to increase strength.
- The ashwagandha plant is a **small shrub with yellow flowers that's native to India and North Africa.**
- Extracts or powder from the plant's root or leaves are used to treat a variety of conditions.
- It is an easily accessible, over-the-counter nutritional supplement and has a proven safety profile.
- It's **classified as an adaptogen, which is believed to help the body resist physical and mental stress.**
- Ashwagandha contains chemicals that might help calm the brain, reduce swelling, lower blood pressure, and alter the immune system.

Some of the conditions it is used for include **insomnia, aging, anxiety** and many others.

All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA)-

- Being conceived as an Apex Institute for Ayurveda, it aims at bringing a synergy between Traditional Wisdom of Ayurveda and Modern tools and technology.
- The institute offers postgraduate and doctoral courses in various disciplines of Ayurveda and focuses on fundamental research of Ayurveda, drug development, standardization, quality control, safety evaluation and scientific validation of Ayurvedic medicine.