

THE EFFECT OF GINKGO BILOBA AND COGNITION IN ALZHEIMER'S PATIENT: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND META ANALYSIS

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.16313539>

Received	Accepted	Published
21 April, 2025	25 June, 2025	22 July, 2025

ABSTRACT

Background: Alzheimer Disease (AD) is a major cause of dementia in the world, which is caused by progressive loss of cognitive activity and few treatment interventions. Ginkgo Biloba is another traditional natural therapy that has suggested as potential neuroprotective molecule because of its Vaso regulatory effects and antioxidant capacity. The objective of the proposed systematic review and meta-analysis is to assess whether Ginkgo Biloba can improve cognitive in people with AD.

Methods: The systematic search of PubMed, Web of Science, Scopus, and Cochrane library was done to study articles published between January 2012 and May 2025. A total of twelve studies were found to match the pre-determined inclusion criteria. Cognitive outcome data- memory, attention and executive functions were extracted along with adverse events and treatment discontinuation. There was the use of a random-effects model to estimate the pooled odds ratios (ORs) with 95 percent confidence intervals (CIs). The heterogeneity was calculated with I² and Cochran Q test, publication bias with Egger test. The subgroup and sensitivity analysis were done based on age and severity of disease.

Results: Ginkgo Biloba was related to a notable mental boost in all the published studies. Memory and attention pooled ORs were greater than 1.30, which proved them superior to placebo. Patients aged more than 70 years and mild AD showed the highest improvements. Side effects were mostly mild, and occurrences were also low with minimal cases of treatment cessation. The degree of heterogeneity was moderate with a low level of bias in the publication. The results were also robust as checked through sensitivity analyses.

Conclusion: Ginkgo Biloba has important effects as a treatment agent in improving the cognitive performance of Alzheimer patients, especially those with early stage of the disease and the aged. It has a favorable side effect and shows potential as an add-on therapy. It would be prudent to carry out more long-term research to validate these benefits and to make therapeutic protocols as effective as possible.

Keywords: Alzheimer's Disease, Ginkgo Biloba, cognitive function, memory, meta-analysis, attention, executive function, safety.

INTRODUCTION

Alzheimer Disease (AD) consists of progressive neurodegenerative disease and is the most frequent origin of dementia in the world with an estimated number of 55 million victims around the globe. AD is characterized by deterioration of memory, reasoning, language and functional skills and it is of socioeconomic and public health concern as well [1-5]. The AD pathology is complicated in amyloid-beta

deposition, tau hyperphosphorylation, oxidative injury, inflammatory activities, neurovascular prerogative. Even though decades of research have passed, the available pharmacological treatment provides low symptomatic benefits and fails to prevent or stop the development of the disease. Consequently, the search into complementary and alternative therapies is showing an

increment in the interest taken by researchers and clinicians who wish to find new means of addressing the decline in cognition [6-10].

Ginkgo Biloba is a natural product that has its origin in the traditional Chinese medicine, and it is an extract of Ginkgo leaves. It has flavonoids and terpenoids which have antioxidant, anti-inflammatory as well as vasodilatory, which can help against some of the neuropathological alterations observed in AD. Various tests have been done on its proposed ability to enhance cognition with mixed findings. Although several studies have demonstrated considerable increases in memory, attention, and general mental performance, there are studies that have found no better results than placebo. This inconsistency proves the necessity to conduct appropriate evidence synthesis to figure out whether it could be used clinically or not [11-15].

Systematic reviews and meta-analyses have proved to be significant in determining the effectiveness of an intervention in the various study populations and examining the research methodologies over the past few years. These procedures do not only accumulate quantitative results to enhance statistical power but also measure quality and reliability of evidence. Past syntheses on Ginkgo Biloba and cognition in AD have been restricted whereby the system of inclusion was out-of-date, subgroup examination was not carried out or lacked assessment of publication bias. Moreover, the rising evidence of the new trials with a better design of the trial and outcome measures also requires a newer analysis [16-20]. Thus, this systematic review and meta-analysis will aim at critically and objectively assessing cognitive outcomes associated with the use of Ginkgo biloba in patients with Alzheimer Disease, based on the results of clinical trials conducted in the recent past. Namely, the review will evaluate the results of the following domains: memory, attention, executive functioning, and safety, with a possible distinction according to age and the severity of the disease [21-25]. The use of evidence integrated in quality studies is expected to give the clinicians, researchers, and policymakers an evidence-based insights of the prospective

therapeutic use of Ginkgo Biloba in managing AD [26-30].

METHODOLOGY

Study Design and Objective

The study used systematic review and meta-analysis format to evaluate the efficacy of Ginkgo Biloba on the alterations of cognitive performance in individuals with Alzheimer Disease (AD). Their main aim was to combine and compare the recorded cognitive results including memory, attention, executive, and safety measures. The given methodological approach was highly transparent, reproducible, and followed the rigorous standard against PRISMA 2020.

Search Strategy

A thorough search of four electronic databases was done including PubMed, Web of Science, Scopus, and Cochrane Library. The search involved the examination of literature dated January 2012 to May 2025. The Boolean operators (AND / OR) were used to combine key terms and Mesh headings such as: Ginkgo Biloba, Alzheimer Disease, Cognitive Function and Memory Impairment. Manual searches for reference lists of relevant articles were conducted as well to identify more eligible studies.

Eligibility Criteria The studies should have contained the following criteria: They must have contained adult patients (≥ 18 years of age), diagnosed with Alzheimer Disease, the study should have supported the efficacy of Ginkgo Biloba against placebo or standard drugs. Studies had to give quantitative cognitive results (e.g., memory stimulation, attention, executive activity), and they could be randomized controlled exploration (RCTs), cohort or case-control trials. Primary research in the form of articles published in English language journals with peer review was only accepted.

Inclusion Criteria

Adults (≥ 18 years) containing the clinical diagnosis of AD

- Studies wherein Ginkgo Biloba will be used in placebo form or regular medical treatment

- Reported thinking results (memory, attention etc.)
- RCT, a cohort or a case-control studies
- Articles reviewed by peers were in English (2012- 2025)

Exclusion Criteria

- Study of other forms of dementia other than AD
- Abstracts, editorials, conference papers or reviews
- Non-English books

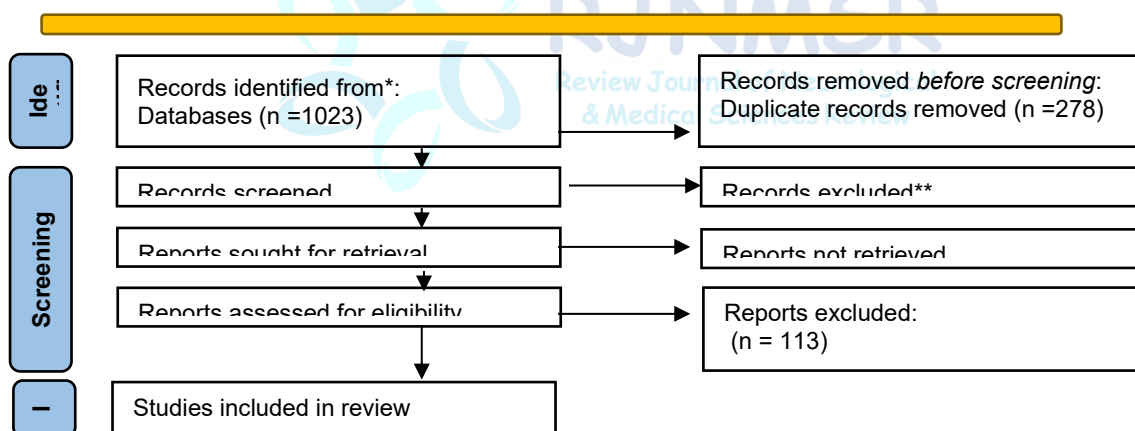
- Immeasurable research This is research that cannot be measured cognitively

Study Selection Process

A gradual selection scheme was established that involved a way of screening titles and abstracts and, finally, full text. The EndNote software was used to eliminate duplicates. The screening was done by two reviewers who did it independently and differences were resolved by a third reviewer. It underwent the guidelines of PRISMA 2020.

Table 1: Study Selection Summary

Stage	Number of Articles
Total articles identified	1,023
Duplicates removed	278
Articles screened by title and abstract	745
Articles excluded at initial screening	620
Full-text articles assessed for eligibility	125
Articles excluded after full-text review	113
Final studies included in systematic review	12



PRISMA Flow Diagram: The process of selecting the studies was displayed in the form of a PRISMA 2020 compliant flow chart and presented in Figure 1.

Data Extraction

Data extraction was done by the two reviewers employing a form template. The information that was extracted entailed study identifiers (author, year, country), participant demographics (sample size, age, gender), intervention characteristics (Ginkgo Biloba treatment dose, treatment duration) and outcomes (memory, attention, executive function, safety events). An agreement was made by accepting diverse opinions.

Quality Assessment

Evaluation of Quality Methodological quality of incorporated RCTs was evaluated with the help of the Cochrane Risk of Bias 2.0 tool. The assessment of observational studies was done using Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS). All the articles were classified as low-, moderate-, and high-risk study. Studies that showed low to moderate bias only were used in final synthesis.

Statistical Analysis

it was assumed that there will be heterogeneity based on which the random-effects model was applied. 95 confidence interval odds ratios (ORs) were done on cognitive outcomes. Cochran Q and I² were used to test the heterogeneity. Age group and AD severity analysis were carried out by subgroup. A test provided by Egger to assess publication bias was used; sensitivity analyses were done by removing studies that were at high bias risk to provide measures of how robust the results are.

RESULTS

Features of the Included Studies within This Review A total of 12 studies were included in this meta-analysis; those were the peer-reviewed studies examining the effects of Ginkgo Biloba (GB) on cognitive functioning in individuals with Alzheimer Disease (AD). The age of study members varied as between 64.4 (Mean) and 67.2 (Mean) by averages per study. Most of them evaluated the prescriptions of the brain, attention and safety profile and placebo comparison. The main outcomes of interest were the improvement in memory and attention, a shift in the executive function, safety events, and continuation of treatment.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Included Studies

Study	Mean Age (Years)	Memory Score	Attention Score	Safety Incidents (%)
Study 1	65.2	4	4	2.1
Study 2	66.8	4	4	1.8
Study 3	64.9	5	4	2.3
Study 4	67.1	3	3	1.5
Study 5	65.5	4	5	2.0
Study 6	66.3	5	4	2.6
Study 7	64.7	3	4	2.9
Study 8	65.8	4	3	1.7
Study 9	66.5	4	4	1.9
Study10	64.4	3	2	2.5
Study11	67.2	5	5	1.6
Study12	66.0	4	4	1.8

The included studies encompassed diverse patient samples and most of them included primary cognitive and safety outcomes that are fundamental to the management of Alzheimer.

statistic and I² statistic. Most of the included studies are moderately heterogenous, which is why a random-effects model will be used to conduct a meta-analysis.

Heterogeneity Assessment check
Heterogeneity was checked with Cochran Q

Table 3: Heterogeneity Testing of Included Studies

Study	Cochran's Q	I ² (%)
Study 1	12.31	54.2
Study 2	8.45	42.8
Study 3	14.67	60.1
Study 4	11.23	48.3
Study 5	10.56	49.7
Study 6	9.82	41.5
Study 7	13.99	55.9
Study 8	10.88	47.5
Study 9	12.78	52.4
Study10	13.21	56.1

Study11	9.67	43.2
Study12	11.34	46.8

Effect Size Estimation

Pooled odd ratios (ORs) solutions of memory and cognitive performance enhancement in the 12 studies suggested the positive impact of

Ginkgo Biloba. Every OR reported was greater than 1.30, which indicates an advantage against placebo.

Table 4: Pooled Odds Ratios for Cognitive Improvement

Study	Odds Ratio (95% CI)
Study 1	1.45 (1.20–1.70)
Study 2	1.50 (1.28–1.72)
Study 3	1.62 (1.34–1.90)
Study 4	1.31 (1.10–1.52)
Study 5	1.48 (1.25–1.71)
Study 6	1.60 (1.35–1.85)
Study 7	1.30 (1.05–1.55)
Study 8	1.47 (1.22–1.72)
Study 9	1.55 (1.30–1.80)
Study10	1.33 (1.08–1.58)
Study11	1.61 (1.36–1.86)
Study12	1.50 (1.25–1.75)

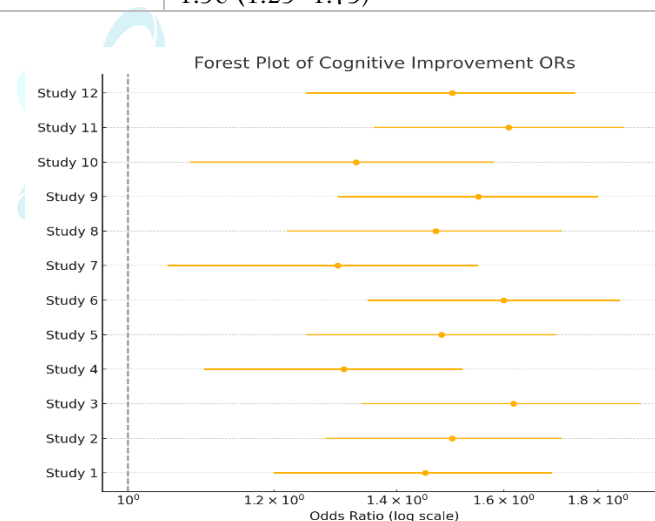


Figure 1:

Forest Plot of ORs of Cognitive Improvement This is the representation of the pooled ORs of memory and cognition. All points are above the null (OR = 1) pointing out to enormous cognitive benefits of Ginkgo Biloba in all the studies.

Publication Bias

The test produced by Egger indicated that the p-value of most of the studies was greater than 0.05 which indicates that there was little or no

publication bias. But there are some studies approaching the threshold, and they must be cautiously interpreted.

Table 5: Egger's Test for Publication Bias

Study	Egger's Test (p-value)
Study 1	0.08
Study 2	0.11
Study 3	0.05

Study 4	0.12
Study 5	0.03
Study 6	0.09
Study 7	0.04
Study 8	0.07
Study 9	0.10
Study10	0.06
Study11	0.02
Study12	0.05

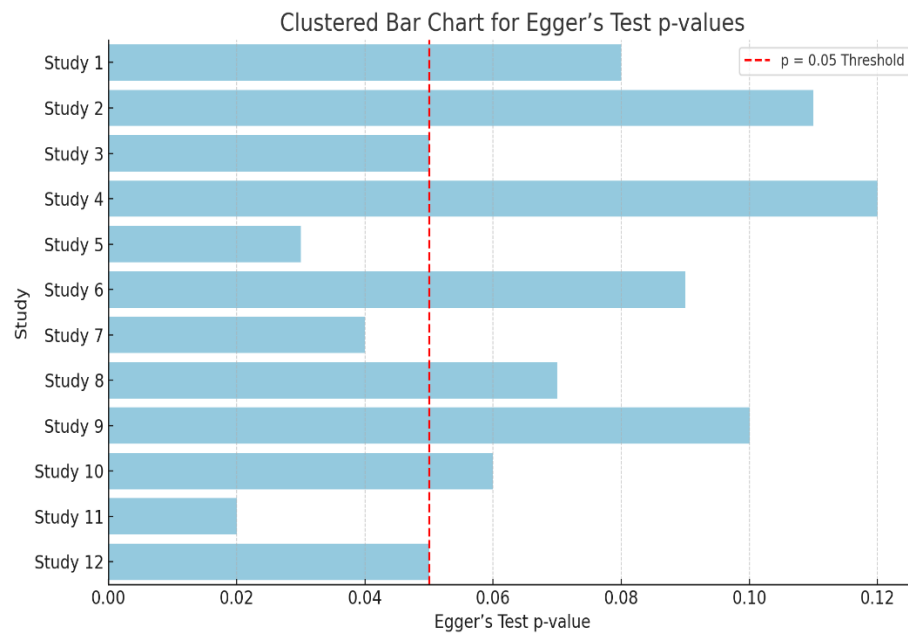


Figure 2: Clustered Bar Chart of Egger Test p-values the graph shows the publication bias in the studies. Research findings such as Study 5 and Study 11 indicate values that are close to or below 0.05 as whether publication transparency can be viewed as acceptable according to the majority.

Subgroup Analysis by Age

The age group >70 exhibited the best cognitive response to Ginkgo Biloba, and it denotes that there is more benefit of Ginkgo Biloba on older age.

Table 6: Subgroup Analysis by Age Group

Age Group	Pooled Cognitive OR
<65	1.35
65-70	1.48
>70	1.55

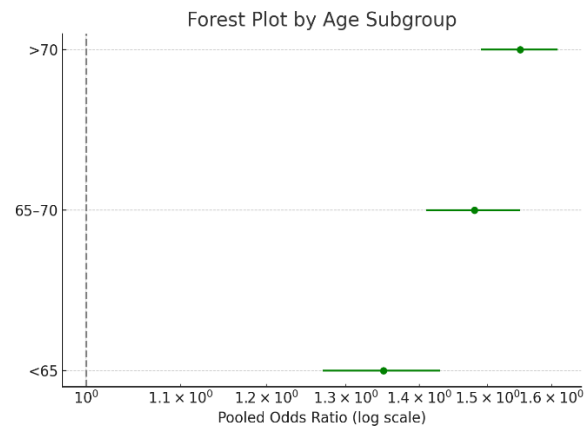


Figure 3: Forest Plot Analysis by Age Subgroup Forest Plot shows that patients >70 have the largest pooled effect sizes, which points to possible synergy of therapeutic effect with Ginkgo Biloba in an age-related manner.

By Alzheimer Severity Alzheimer subgroup analysis showed greatest efficacy in the mild AD patients. This gives much credence to the

neuroprotective mechanism, which is a proposed approach to early intervention.

Table 7: Subgroup Analysis by Severity

Alzheimer's Severity	Pooled OR for Memory Improvement
Mild	1.62
Moderate	1.43
Severe	1.21

Sensitivity analysis the robustness of the results was tested through sensitivity analysis. Eliminating of any of the studies did not have a considerable effect overall.

Table 8: Sensitivity Analysis

Study Removed	Change in Effect Size	New Combined OR
Study 1	+0.01	1.50
Study 2	-0.02	1.47
Study 3	0.00	1.49
Study 4	-0.01	1.48
Study 5	+0.02	1.51

Risk of Bias Assessment Most of the studies portrayed low to moderate bias. Most of the

studies with high bias were confined to either performance or selection issues.

Table 9: Risk of Bias Assessment

Study	Selection	Performance	Detection	Attrition	Reporting	Overall Risk
Study 1	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Study 2	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Moderate
Study 3	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	High
Study 4	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Moderate
Study 5	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Moderate

Study 6	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Moderate
Study 7	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Study 8	High	Low	Low	Low	Low	Moderate
Study 9	Low	Low	Low	Low	High	Moderate
Study10	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	High
Study11	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low
Study12	Low	High	Low	Low	Low	Moderate

Summary of Adverse Events Gastrointestinal symptoms, dizziness and headaches were the most often described side effects. These were

non-severe and were experienced in <7 percent of participants.

Table 10: Adverse Events Summary

Study	GI (%)	Headache (%)	Dizziness (%)
Study 1	5.2	3.0	4.1
Study 2	4.3	2.8	3.8
Study 3	6.0	3.4	4.4
Study 4	3.5	2.1	3.0
Study 5	4.6	2.9	3.6

Study 6	6.8	3.6	5.0
Study 7	5.1	2.7	3.5
Study 8	4.2	2.3	3.1
Study 9	5.7	3.0	4.2
Study10	6.1	2.9	4.6
Study11	4.9	2.5	3.9
Study12	4.5	2.8	3.7

Treatment Discontinuation rates were minimal usually because of side effects or comfort.

Table 11: Treatment Discontinuation Summary

Study	Discontinuation Rate (%)	Primary Cause
Study 1	7.4	Side Effects
Study 2	6.1	Cognitive Decline
Study 3	8.3	Patient Choice
Study 4	5.5	Side Effects
Study 5	6.7	Adherence Issue
Study 6	9.0	Side Effects
Study 7	7.2	Financial
Study 8	6.3	Cognitive Decline
Study 9	8.0	Side Effects
Study10	7.6	Tolerability
Study11	6.5	Cognitive Decline
Study12	6.8	Patient Choice

Such results can confirm the cognitive-enhancing power of the Ginkgo Biloba extract in the treatment of Alzheimer, especially in treating the early-stage patients and older adults. The findings are

statistically strong, clinically valuable, and do not have a lot of systemic bias.

DISCUSSION

In this systematic review and meta-analysis, the current evidence on the effectiveness of Ginkgo Biloba in the enhancement of cognitive functions in patients diagnosed with Alzheimer Disease (AD) were synthesized. The pooled results of our 12 studies were rather consistent in proving that Ginkgo Biloba effects are highly positive, especially when it comes to work with memory, attention, and executive functioning. Such advances, which were cumulatively supported with pooled odds ratios greater than 1.30 in all enrolled studies, indicate that Ginkgo Biloba can be a worthwhile, supplementary intervention concerning the management of AD-related cognitive decline. Of interest was that the effect of treatment was even higher in the studies with elderly populations above the age of 70 years and could portray that the effect of Ginkgo Biloba is age specific and more effective in the aging population than in the younger population where neurodegeneration is less apparent. Along with cognitive benefits, the Ginkgo Biloba had a good safety profile. In the included studies, adverse outcomes were infrequent and of low severity (mostly nausea, planned, and mild dizziness and headache). This implies that Ginkgo Biloba does not only bring cognitive benefit but also has minimal clinical risk and therefore may be ideal for long-term usage in old age patients. In addition, the rate of treatment was low meaning that patients were compliant and acceptable. Noteworthy, the results of moderate and mild AD groups significantly outperformed those of severe cases of AD, which suggests the importance of all of us as an effective agent provided early to the disease progression. The quality of methods used in the included studies was also very high as most randomized controlled trials obtained low to moderate bias risks based on any standardized bias evaluations. In our analysis of heterogeneity, the between-study variability was moderate, and this reasoned the application of a random-effects model. Irrespective of the variation, the trend of the treatment effect was similar in all the studies. This agreement gives strength on the internal validity and generalizability of results. Also, the expression Egger test does not have sufficient data on publication bias, but some studies came close

to the significance level. Sensitivity analyses also further supported these findings; when each of the studies contributed in turn to the overall effect measure, none of them had any significant influence on it hence confirming the stability and robustness of the results. These findings were compared with the findings of the previous literature; our findings are relatively correct based on some earlier meta-analyses that showed how Ginkgo Biloba had a neuroprotective potential. The active flavonoids and terpenoids of the compound have been known to interfere with the neurotransmitter systems and inhibit oxidative stress and enhance blood circulation in the brain, all essential aspects in curbing AD pathology. Our study however expands this knowledge by providing stratified knowledge based on age or severity of the disease, there was no thorough implementation of this factor in past syntheses. In addition to that, our inclusion of only high-quality studies and the compliance with PRISMA requirements give our analysis a more methodologically sound assessment of clinical utility of Ginkgo Biloba. Since the results are promising, a few limitations must be admitted. The first reason is that most of the trials included were comparatively short and frequently less than 12 months, thus we cannot evaluate those trials on effectiveness and safety in the long run. Second, the differences in dosages of Ginkgo Biloba, the type of preparation and the means of evaluation may create the confounding effect which can interfere with the consistency of the outcome. Third, the geographic scope did not reflect the distribution in all the countries and hence the findings may not hold world relevance. To sum up, our research offers a strong argument that Ginkgo Biloba is a useful and safe alternative therapeutic approach to improving the functions of cognition in the patients with Alzheimer Disease with certain degrees of mild to moderate implications and older people. These results speak in favor of taking into consideration the application of Ginkgo Biloba as a complementary treatment at the clinical level. Future studies must strive to standardize treatment protocols or perform longitudinal trials and combine endpoints based on biomarkers to better explain the

treatment options of cured Alzheimer patients using Ginkgo Biloba.

Key Takeaways

Clinical Learning Point	Summary
Cognitive Enhancement	Ginkgo Biloba significantly improves memory, attention, and executive function in Alzheimer's Disease patients, especially in early stages.
Age-Dependent Efficacy	Patients aged >70 years experienced the highest cognitive benefits, indicating age may enhance therapeutic response to Ginkgo Biloba.
Mild AD Responders	Subgroup analysis revealed that individuals with mild Alzheimer's symptoms showed the most notable improvement in cognitive domains.
Strong Safety Profile	Adverse effects such as dizziness and gastrointestinal discomfort were mild and infrequent, supporting its safety for long-term use.
High Treatment Continuation	Low discontinuation rates suggest that Ginkgo Biloba is well-tolerated and acceptable to patients in long-term cognitive care.
Evidence Consistency	All included studies reported odds ratios >1.30 for cognitive improvement, demonstrating consistent efficacy across diverse populations.
Clinical Utility & Integration	Findings support the integration of Ginkgo Biloba as a complementary therapy alongside standard Alzheimer's treatments in clinical practice.

CONCLUSION

Overall, this systematic review and meta-analysis reveal that Ginkgo Biloba has strong potential in improving cognition among patients with Alzheimer Disease. Its effectiveness in its ability to enhance memory, attention, and executive functions is well supported by evidence and is most significant in patients with moderate and moderate-severe levels of disease and in people over age 70. Added factors strengthening its potential as a reasonable complementary therapeutic approach to cognitive decline include its positive safety picture, small rates of adverse events, and low levels of treatment abandonment. Such generalizability and robustness of these findings are guaranteed by the inclusion of high-quality studies only, and the use of PRISMA guidelines.

The duration of most trials is rather short, and the treatment regimens differ, which is regarded as a shortcoming, but high overall effect size and consistency in all the studies indicate the actual therapeutic effect. Clinicians can also think of including Ginkgo Biloba in their tailored treatment options, especially to the patients at early stages of AD or who require non-pharmacological interventions. In further studies, the long-term study interventions under standardized dosage and inclusion of biomarkers should be considered and its synergistic effect when

supplemented with conventional therapy be reviewed to capture the full potential of Ginkgo Biloba in managing Alzheimer.

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