

CLINICAL TRIAL WITH SAMAHAN

Daily use of Link Samahan reduces incidence and severity of upper respiratory symptoms in healthy volunteers: an open label, randomised controlled clinical trial

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Efficacy of a daily intake of one sachet of Link Samahan in reducing the incidence and severity of 15 upper respiratory symptoms associated with catarrh and colds, has been firmly established in a clinical trial of a cohort of over 950 volunteer participants conducted by an expert research team in Sri Lanka. The study has been approved by the Sri Lanka Medical Association's Ethical Review Committee (ERC/10-14), and registered by the Sri Lanka Clinical Trials Registry (SLCTR/2011/001). This study compared the effect of taking one sachet daily of Link Samahan in warm water for 84 consecutive days, on 15 CLINICAL upper respiratory symptoms, previously validated for reliability, responsiveness, importance-to-patients, and convergence with other measures, in a cohort of healthy volunteers (test group, n=465), with a similar cohort taking only plain tea at approximately the same time of day (control group, n=491). Both cohorts were derived from 1020 volunteers by random allocation.

Participants of both study groups completed a daily log, to document the incidence and severity of the 15 upper respiratory symptoms (excess sneezing, runny nose, blocked nose, scratchy eyes and tearing, scratchy throat, sore throat, hoarseness, feverishness, tiredness, headache, scratchy ears, blocked ears, loss of appetite, body pains and difficulty in accomplishing daily tasks) on a 4-point scale (0 = no symptom, 1 = mild symptom, 2 = moderate symptom, and 3 = severe symptom). Log sheet analyses were performed by professional statisticians who were blinded to the identity of the group to which volunteer participants belonged. The results of this study show that at the end of 84 days, when compared to the control group, the average incidence of all 15 symptoms in the test group showed significant reductions at $P<0.001$ for 6 symptoms, at $P<0.005$ for 3 symptoms, and at $P<0.05$ for the remaining six.

Reduction of average incidence over time also was highly significant ($P<0.001$) for 2 symptoms and ($P<0.005$) for 7, and significant ($P<0.05$) for 4 symptoms, but only marginal for the balance two. Severity was significantly reduced ($P<0.05$) for 7 symptoms, and reduced also for the other 8 according to descriptive analysis, though not significant at the 5% level.

The results of this clinical trial indicate that taking one sachet of Link Samahan significantly reduces average incidence, incidence over time, and severity of 15 upper respiratory symptoms in healthy adults. Findings of this trial are published in Ceylon Medical Journal 2012;57: 21-32. Full details of the trial can be found on <http://www.sljol.info/index.php/CMJ/article/download/4197/3441>.

Upper respiratory tract inflammation occurs commonly in both children and adults, and is a major cause of morbidity. These troublesome inflammations consume resources from individuals and from the society, as they are responsible for frequent absenteeism from school and employment, and for obtaining medical care. So the results of this study indicate another dimension for investigation apart from Link Samahan's clinical efficacy ie. the probable effects of Link Samahan in curbing absenteeism and increasing output among employees in highly productivity-oriented industries by reducing incidence and severity of distressing upper respiratory symptoms.

Link Samahan is an over-the-counter standardized preparation widely used for over 15 years, both in Sri Lanka and overseas. Presently the total local sales and exported sales exceeds 100 000 000 sachets annually. It is a 100% herbal health product made from a time-tested efficacious formula comprising *Adhatoda vasica*, *Alpinia galanga*, *Carum copticum*, *Coriandrum*

sativum, Coscinium fenestratum, Cuminum cyminum, Evolulus alsinoides, Glycyrrhiza glabra, Hedyotis corymbosa, Piper longum, Piper nigrum, Premna herbacea, Solanum xanthocarpum, and Zingiber officinale. The efficacy and the probable pharmacologic basis for beneficial effects of these individual components in upper respiratory tract symptoms associated with catarrh and colds, have been extensively previously reported in the scientific literature. However, the present study is the first ever demonstration by a randomized controlled clinical trial of the clinical efficacy of a time-tested standardized ayurvedic preparation, harmoniously blended on the advice of a panel of senior and clinically experienced ayurvedic physicians.

The men of experience are like the ant, they only collect and use; the reasoners resemble spiders, who make cobwebs out of their own substance. But the bee takes the middle course: it gathers its material from the flowers of the garden and field, but transforms and digests it by a power of its own. Not unlike this is the true business of philosophy (science); for it neither relies solely or chiefly on the powers of the mind, nor does it take the matter which it gathers from natural history and mechanical experiments and lay up in the memory whole, as it finds it, but lays it up in the understanding altered and digested. Therefore, from a closer and purer league between these two faculties, the experimental and the rational (such as has never been made), much may be hoped.

Francis Bacon, Novum Organum, Liberal Arts Press, Inc., New York, p 93. (5) Available from Amazon.com

..The paradoxical and unfortunate mix of the modern and the mystical is understandable in terms of public trust of the scientific community. Debates on the environment, energy, and defense, engage apparent experts on every side of the issues. Hotly contested cases in court proceedings and legislative hearings may make it seem that scientific evidence is less reliable, less certain than was previously believed. Seeing this pattern students lose the natural curiosity about truthful explanations, become cynical about the motives of experts and wonder whether science and mathematics are worth the time and effort to master.

Rodney Nichols, 2001

The most ordinary things are to philosophy a source of insoluble puzzles. With infinite ingenuity it constructs a concept of space or time and then finds it absolutely impossible that there be objects in this space or that processes occur during this time... the source of this kind of logic lies in excessive confidence in the so-called laws of thought.

Ludwig Boltzmann. Populaere Schriften Essay 19, Ludwig Boltzmann, Theoretical Physics and Philosophical Problems, B. McGuinness (ed) Reidel, Dordrecht, 1974, p 64. (7)