
Abstract
The numbers of marketing claims and food, beverage, and drug products claiming to increase mental energy have risen rapidly, thus increasing the need for scientific specificity in marketing and food label claims. Mental energy is a three-dimensional construct consisting of mood (transient feelings about the presence of fatigue or energy), motivation (determination and enthusiasm), and cognition (sustained attention and vigilance). The present review focuses on four dietary constituents’ supplements (Ginkgo biloba, ginseng, glucose, and omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids) to illustrate the current state of the literature on dietary constituents and mental energy. The strongest evidence suggests effects of Ginkgo biloba on certain aspects of mood and on attention in healthy subjects, as well as associations between omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids and reduced risk of age-related cognitive decline. Limitations of the current data and challenges for future research are discussed.