

3.2.2.3.6.6 Yohimbe or yohimbine – which is better?

I have long been undecided on what would have the better effect: yohimbe, the bark, or yohimbine, the pharmaceutical.

I am now convinced that yohimbine, the pharmaceutical, is to be recommended over yohimbe, the bark.

The bark contains a good number of alkaloids, of which yohimbine is just one. Other indole alkaloids found in yohimbe bark are the yohimbine stereoisomers “-yohimbine” and allo-yohimbine, as well as ajamalicin, dihydroyohimbine, corynanthein, dihydrocorynanthein, and corynanthin (rauhinbin).

While some of the other alkaloids found in yohimbe bark have been suspected to aid in the bark's function as aphrodisiac, their pro-sexual effect definitely is not as pronounced as the one of yohimbine. Other effects may be attributed to them.

Traditional uses of yohimbe bark are not limited to its pro-sexual effects. Yohimbe bark has also long been smoked or otherwise ingested to facilitate hallucinogenic experiences. I have tried smoking the bark. It doesn't burn well, and as I am a non-tobacco smoker, I don't have much tolerance for inhaling smoke. I smoked a mere quarter of a gram of the bark. It caused a mild nausea nothing pleasurable.

I have read sources on the Internet in which people with a history of “drug abuse” cooked some 7 teaspoons of bark as a tea. The word “tea” suggests that they didn't ingest the cooked bark but just the water in which they tried to extract the bark.

But yohimbine is difficult to extract by boiling. In the industrial production of yohimbine, hydrochloric acid is used. Stomach acidity is needed to extract the yohimbe from ingested yohimbe powder. Yohimbe tea will not do.

I have tried the ingestion of about 1 teaspoon of finely ground yohimbe bark, simmered in orange juice under addition of about 1

gram Vitamin C. This was not a tea; there was no bark leftover. The ground yohimbe floated in the orange juice.

From this concoction, I had a mental effect that I usually do not feel from ingesting yohimbine tablets or yohimbe extracts. It gave me a headache. The genital effect was lesser.

On the other hand, sleep has been even more difficult after ingesting yohimbe bark instead of yohimbine, the pharmaceutical. From an honest 10 mg of yohimbine, I can have a pronounced pro-sexual effect and usually can find sleep some 20 hours later.

If I ingest raw powdered yohimbe bark in an amount small enough that it doesn't give me a headache, I have very little pro-sexual benefit but may not be able to sleep for 24 hours or more. If I haven't ingested the yohimbe bark in the morning right after getting up, this can add up to 36 or more hours without sleep.

For yohimbe bark, the sleep-prohibiting effect sets in at a dosage still too small for a pronounced pro-sexual effect, and it seems that yohimbe alkaloids other than yohimbine are harder to break down by my metabolic system. Therefore, I judge the synthesis of yohimbine as a clear progress.

I assume that the relationship between yohimbe bark and yohimbine is similar to the relationship between raw opium and morphine or heroin. I have never consumed heroin but have once been on morphine (for a tonsils operation), and I have once (in India) smoked opium. I have also talked to a number of addicts in Europe. They characterized morphine and heroin as much "cleaner" in its effect than opium. Smoking opium largely immobilizes, and opium smokers are drowsed. Those who do morphine or heroin usually are not. I get an idea when they characterize opium as "dirty" drug. It affects all kinds of bodily functions while morphine and heroin are said to just give a persistent orgasmic pleasure. (This is obviously no endorsement of morphine or heroin; one pays too dearly for a kick a few times.)

I have considerable experience with yohimbe bark, yohimbe extracts, and pure yohimbine. I, too, would describe yohimbine, the pharmaceutical, as "cleaner" in effect than yohimbe, the bark.

Yohimbine is more concentrated on sexual effects, and it doesn't give me a headache, or make me feel dumb. Not at all; rather it promotes mental alertness.

Obviously, yohimbe is more readily available in most countries than is yohimbine. In the US, yohimbe bark is sold in health food stores while yohimbine is a prescription drug. That's a disadvantage to US consumers.

It's a disadvantage not only because the effects of yohimbine are more specifically pro-sexual than the effects of the alkaloid mixture of the bark. It's a disadvantage also because it is almost impossible to give proper dosage recommendations for the bark. If you use bark or bark extracts, you will always have to try, and often not have the desired effect because the dosage is too small; but you can't start with a generous dosage either because you may accidentally just have a good specimen.

Even genuine yohimbe bark varies greatly in its content of yohimbine. It could be 1 percent, but it could also be considerably more or less. How much yohimbine is found in yohimbe bark depends, for example, on what time of the year it is harvested. Exposure to more rain is believed to increase the yohimbine content of yohimbe bark. Exposure to sunlight (after harvesting) is considered to have a negative effect on the yohimbine concentration.

Another problem is that what is sold as yohimbe bark is not always the bark of the *Pausinystalia yohimbe* (*Corynanthe yohimbe*) tree but also of the more common *Pausinystalia macroceras* tree. Even experts have a hard time to keep the two apart, and in West Africa, *Pausinystalia macroceras* bark is used as a substitute for *Pausinystalia yohimbe* bark in areas where the latter has become extinct due to over-exploitation. However, *Pausinystalia macroceras* bark is much lower in yohimbine content; instead it boosts a higher content of the related but largely ineffective alkaloid yohimbinine.

Sure, some yohimbe extract capsules may have a good yohimbine content. Luckily, the first ones I myself have tried were very effective on me. And I have never found a bark extract of similar strength. Many commercial products I tried later were largely ineffective.

Technical Resources International, Inc. reported: "Betz and coworkers (1995) investigated yohimbine in commercial yohimbe products. Gas chromatograph determinations were done on liquids and powders (from capsules and caplets). Virtually all the products tested did not specify on their labels that the product contained yohimbe bark extract. Concentrations of yohimbine in the commercial products ranged from >0.1 to 489 ppm, compared with 7089 ppm in the authentic bark material. Of the 26 products examined, nine contained no quantifiable amount of yohimbine; eight contained only trace amounts (0.1-1 ppm). The authors suggest that the absence of alkaloids in the products indicated that the original extraction was aqueous (because the alkaloids are not particularly water soluble), the extract was extremely diluted in the final dosage form, or no yohimbe bark was used to make the product."

With yohimbe and yohimbe extracts, one never knows. Most yohimbe products are weak, but occasionally one gets a real strong one on which one can potentially overdose. You can't go by the labels. The only way to know the strength of the capsules contained in a particular bottle is to try them (or to make a laboratory analysis). When testing a new yohimbe product, I always start with a very low dose, about half a capsule, and then work myself up to several capsules a time, depending on how well a lower dosage worked.

Yohimbe capsules standardized for a certain amount of yohimbine are now emerging on the market. One of the first standardized products was Twinlab's Yohimbe Fuel for which they claim 8 mg of yohimbine per capsule.

Laboratories sell all kinds of yohimbe extracts, 1:2, 1:4, 1:8, or 1%, 2%, 4%. If you see a bottle that claims "Yohimbe Extract", you don't know nothing yet. How strong it is may depend on the logics applied by the manufacturer of the specific capsules. Some manufacturers may want to err on the safe side, so they use a weak extract; others may see a market for a brand name of yohimbe extract that actually works. So they may go for a strong extract.

One reason why I recommend yohimbine over yohimbe is that working with yohimbe will waste a lot of time. When you open a bottle, it will take three or four trials until you really can judge the contents. With yohimbine tablets you can be much more certain as to what to expect.