

A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF HOMEOPATHY – A CONVENTIONAL MEDICINAL SYSTEM

¹Dr.N.Aruna Kumari, ²Dr. Surya Bhagavan Polina, ³Dr.A.Vasundhara,

¹Assoc.Prof of Applied Chemistry, Dadi Institute of Engineering and Technology, Anakapalle

²MD., Professor, Dr.A.R.Govt Homeopathy College, Rajahmundry

³HOD & Reader, Dept.of Chemistry, SKR College for Women, Rajahmundry

ABSTRACT

The alternative medical system of Homeopathy (=homoeopathy) is a branch of medicine originated in Germany in 1794, which is based on the principle of The Law of Similars. In a way, it is an advanced form of vaccination; whereby a substance which is capable of producing a disease like state is administered to the patient, but in a very minute dose, to cure the similar disease. Homeopathy works much beyond vaccination. Here, the dose administered is unbelievably minuscule, which renders it absolutely harmless yet very powerful. Contrary to the conventional medicine, the action of homeopathy is much safer, deeper acting, somewhat slower, and results much longer lasting by energizing the body's curative powers. Homeopathy treats each person as a unique individual with the aim of stimulating their own healing ability. A homeopath selects the most appropriate medicine based on the individual's specific symptoms and personal level of health. It is recognised by the World Health Organization as the second largest therapeutic system in use in the world. While it is most popular in India and South America, over thirty million people in Europe, and millions of others around the world, also benefit from its use.

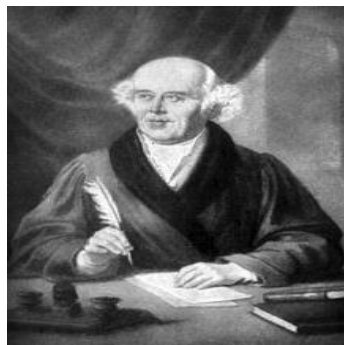
I INTRODUCTION

Homeopathic remedies are derived from substances that come from plants, minerals, or animals, such as red onion, arnica (mountain herb), crushed whole bees, white arsenic, poison ivy, belladonna (deadly nightshade), and stinging nettle. Homeopathic remedies are often formulated as sugar pellets to be placed under the tongue; they may also be in other forms, such as ointments, gels, drops, creams, and tablets. Treatments are “individualized” or tailored to each person—it is not uncommon for different people with the same condition to receive different treatments.

- **Homeopathy** is amongst the youngest and latest medicines calling for more research and promotion.
- Here are theories on how exactly homeopathic medicine works. As supported in major clinical trials and in practice, it is believed to be working by stimulating body's own healing mechanisms.

- For example, in case of diseases which are caused by infection, it seems to be working by stimulating the production of antibodies, defense blood cells, etc.
- In cases of immune diseases, it seems to be working by correcting the immune mechanism.
- In case of painful conditions, by activating body's anti-pain mechanisms.
- Similarly, its action must be on the lines of being antispasmodic, anti-allergic, immuno-modulatory, anti-inflammatory, hormone stimulatory, anti-carcinogenic, etc.
- Large scale studies alone will allow full exploration of this young science.

Homeopathy is a system of alternative medicine created in 1796 by Samuel Hahnemann, based on his doctrine of *like cures like* (*similia similibus curentur*), a claim that a substance that causes the symptoms of a disease in healthy people would cure similar symptoms in sick people^[1]. Homeopathy is a pseudoscience – a belief that is incorrectly presented as scientific. Homeopathic preparations are not effective for treating any condition;^{[2][3][4][5]} large-scale studies have found homeopathy to be no more effective than a placebo, suggesting that any positive feelings that follow treatment are only due to the placebo effect and normal recovery from illness.



Samuel Hahnemann, originator of homeopathy

Hahnemann believed the underlying causes of disease were phenomena that he termed *miasms*, and that homeopathic preparations addressed these. The preparations are manufactured using a process of homeopathic dilution, in which a chosen substance is repeatedly diluted in alcohol or distilled water, each time with the containing vessel being bashed against an elastic material, (commonly a leather-bound book). Dilution typically continues well past the point where no molecules of the original substance remain. Homeopaths select homeopathics by consulting reference books known as *repertories*, and by considering the totality of the patient's symptoms, personal traits, physical and psychological state, and life history.

Homeopathy is not a plausible system of treatment, as its dogmas about how drugs, illness, the human body, liquids and solutions operate are contradicted by a wide range of discoveries across biology, psychology, physics and chemistry made in the two centuries since its invention. Although some clinical trials produce positive results,^{[17][18]}

multiple systematic reviews have indicated that this is because of chance, flawed research methods, and reporting bias. Continued homeopathic practice, despite the evidence that it does not work, has been criticized as unethical because it discourages the use of effective treatments,^[19] with the World Health Organisation warning against using homeopathy to try to treat severe diseases such as HIV and malaria.^[20] The continued practice of homeopathy, despite a lack of evidence of efficacy,^{[6][7][21]} has led to it being characterized within the scientific and medical communities as nonsense,^[22] quackery,^{[4][23][24]} and a sham.^[25]

Homeopathy is an old system of medicine that uses extreme dilutions of substances to stimulate a healing response in the body. It is based on three fundamental principles of cure:

1. **Law of Similars** "similia similibus curantur," or "like cures like," in other words, a substance that can cause a symptom in a healthy person can also cure the symptom in a sick person.
2. **Law of individualization** - homeopathy recognizes that each individual possesses his own unique pattern of symptoms (physical, mental, and spiritual), and at the time of illness, homeopathy seeks the person in disease, and not the disease in the person.
3. **Law of infinitesimal dose** - homeopathy administers a minute dose of substance that is similar to the total symptoms found in the patient. In homeopathy, the name of the disease is not important, it is mainly interested in finding the modality of the symptoms found in the patient.

II THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF PRACTICES: CLASSICAL AND COMPLEX HOMEOPATHY

In classical homeopathy, one remedy is administered to treat the sum total of symptoms found in the patient. It is highly effective in the treatment of chronic diseases. Disease is much more complex today than it was at the time when classical homeopathy was first invented by Dr Samuel Hahnemann. Vaccinations, antibiotics, and synthetic drugs have created complex health conditions.

In complex homeopathy, a combination of two or more remedies at low to medium potency are used to treat disease.

The fundamental principle of homeopathy is based on the law of Similars "like cures like", the very substance that is capable of producing symptoms in a healthy individual will cure similar symptoms in a sick individual.

The main cause of disease is toxins. Toxins perturb the equilibrium of the vital force and disturb vital function. At the time of illness, the vital force attempts to bring the organism back to balance. Symptoms are an expression of the organism trying to prosecute a morbid cause. It is a warning sign which substantiates the disease.

In the presence of a toxin (*viral, bacterial, or fungal*), the body produces an immune response. This immune response is necessary to attack the invader. When a homeopathic remedy similar to the disease is administered, it

stimulates a similar response. Once, the immune system is stimulated, it fights the invader with more power. Therefore, the homeopathic cure is attributed to an increase in the body's defense against disease.

When the immune system is weak and not able to bring the organism back to a complete cure on its own, it needs to be stimulated with medicine. The drug must contain powerful medicinal energies capable of stimulating the immune system.

2.1 About homeopathic treatment: Acute and Chronic

There are two main categories of treatment in Homeopathic Medicine; i.e., **Acute** and **Chronic**.

Acute treatment is for illness of recent onset; it may be self-limited (for example, the common cold), or it may progress if not treated (for example, pneumonia). In such an illness the body might overcome the illness, a cold for example, sooner or later, but the appropriate medicine gently stimulates the body to recover more quickly and efficiently.

Chronic or constitutional treatment is the other main category of treatment. A chronic disease is long standing or a recurrent health problem. The length of treatment and the challenge to achieve positive results is affected by many factors, including the nature of the problem, the early health history, the family medical history, the previous treatment, and the person's inherent constitutional strength. The goal is to help the person to return to a state of well-being through individualized homeopathic treatment.

2.1.1 The Medicinal Energy of The Remedy

The repeated succussion (*dilutions*) of the remedy leaves an energy imprint of the original substance. Since, energy cannot be destroyed but transformed, the medicinal energy resonates with the body's vital energy and stimulates a healing response.

Once, the remedy is placed under the tongue, the effect of the medicinal energy works on the sublingual nerve around the tongue. The nerve transmits a signal along the sensory nerve cells to the spinal cord where the signals are passed on to the motor cells and then to the affected part.

2.2.2 Homeopathy Treat

Homeopathy can treat acute and chronic ailments, mental and emotional conditions, safely and effectively without causing any side effects. Unlike any other medicine, homeopathy can alter genetic disease influences on both the physical and psychological level.

2.2. Homeopathy Work the On System in Human Body

- Nervous system

- Lymphatic system
- Reproductive system
- Respiratory system
- Digestive system
- Endocrine system
- Circulatory system
- Cutaneous system
- Urinary system
- Skeletal system
- Immune system
- Renal system

2.3 The Causes which Homeopathy Not to Work

In homeopathy, special attention is given to the relationship of homeopathic remedies.

There are remedies that complement one another, some that follow well, and others that antidote each other. Certain products can cause homeopathy not to work such as spicy foods, raw garlic, onions, mint lozenges, spearmint gum, camphor oil, coffee, tea, alcohol, illegal drugs, tobacco, mint toothpaste and mouthwashes.

Pets respond very favorably to homeopathy. The best way to give a homeopathic medicine is in liquid form. Put four drops in a half cup of distilled water, and give it with a syringe, or put four drops in tuna water squeezed out of the can.

2.4 How Long Does it Take for Homeopathy to Work

Because a remedy is taken frequently during the acute phase to stimulate the immune system, the recovery is quick. Chronic disease, on the other hand, takes longer to heal because a series of homeopathic remedies are needed to peel away layers of suppressed symptoms.

III ALLOPATHY VERSUS HOMEOPATHY MYTHS BUSTED

The science of Homeopathy has been the subject of many debates and discussions - people bombarding the propagators and followers of this science with allegations and accusations of various kinds. But even after all this, Homeopathy has emerged victorious and put a stop to all of these with the help of research-based evidences and successfully treated cases. Here are some of the common myths (about Homeopathy) that have clearly fallen apart:

Myth 1: Homeopathic medicines are placebos

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recognized Homeopathy as an accepted system of medicine and the world's second largest system of medicine. There have been many double blind trials conducted where the efficacy of Homeopathic medicines have been proved. Studies have shown the ability of Homeopathic medicines to induce physiological changes in the body temperature. Homeopathy even works on animals in diseases like distemper and fifty percent of veterinary doctors in UK use Homeopathy. It shows effective results in infants even in acute diseases such as abdominal colic. This would not have been possible if homeopathic remedies were placebos.

Myth 2: Homeopathic medicines are slow to act and cannot be used in acute cases

Most people take recourse in Homeopathy for chronic problems such as arthritis, allergic asthma or skin conditions, etc., which take a longer time to be treated with any other system of medicine too. However, in acute ailments like fever, diarrhoea, acute cold, cough, etc., homeopathic remedies act as fast as conventional medicines, sometimes even faster.

Myth 3: All homeopathic medicines are the same

Although all homeopathic medicines look alike, essentially they are not the same. The basic ingredients of homeopathic medicines come from 3000 different sources that are mainly derived from plants and minerals. Their active principles are extracted into various solvents. For better palatability, the liquid homeopathic medicine is poured into small globules, which are highly porous and therefore absorptive. Although they may look alike, every homeopathic remedy is different from another.

Myth 4: Homeopathy cannot help surgical cases at all

A number of surgical conditions can be treated effectively with Homeopathy, for e.g. recurrent tonsillitis, piles, fissures, fistula, chronic ear discharge, vocal cord nodules, kidney and gall bladder stones, small-sized uterine fibroids, ovarian cysts, warts and corns. However, every medical science has its set of advantages and limitations. Thus, in certain cases where the disease has reached an advanced stage or in emergency cases, surgery is essential and cannot be avoided. In fact, many surgeons and dentists use Homeopathy pre and post operatively. A homeopathic remedy Calendula is recommended as an external application by many surgeons to facilitate better surgical wound healing without leaving behind ugly scars.

Myth 5: There are too many dietary restrictions to be followed during homeopathic treatment

The only medical restrictions that a homeopath may impose depend upon the disease that the patient suffers from; for example, diabetics should avoid sweets and a high carbohydrate diet. Since homeopathic medicines act through nerve endings, traditional homeopaths do not prefer the use or consumption of any substance with strong odors like toothpaste, garlic, onions, etc., as this could affect the action of homeopathic medicines. Modern homeopaths recommend having the medicines after rinsing the mouth half an hour before and after meals and also advocate placing the medicine below the tongue for best results.

Myth 6: Homeopathy and Allopathy cannot be taken together

In patients suffering from drug-dependant diseases such as diabetes and high blood pressure, allopathic drugs cannot be suddenly withdrawn; hence, homeopathic medicines may be taken with allopathic medicines. However, allopathic medicine is often palliative or suppressive. For example, if a patient with headache takes a painkiller, his symptoms would get masked and therefore a good prescription by a homeopath could become difficult. Similarly, some medicines in Allopathy tend to suppress rather than cure while homeopathic medicines may expel toxins. In such cases, it is better to take Homeopathy alone.

Allopathy – *n. A method of treating diseases with remedies that produce effects different from those caused by the disease itself.*

Homeopathy – *n. A method of treating diseases with remedies that produce effects similar to those caused by the disease itself.*

The large majority of physicians in America practice allopathic medicine. And while very few people outside of the health-care industry could define the term, its practice is ubiquitous and almost fully internalized by the general public. An example of allopathic treatment would include elevating a sprained ankle and wrapping the afflicted area in ice in order to reduce swelling. Bandages may also be used to prevent use of the joints. Swelling, the symptom, is attacked instead of the injury itself.

But homeopaths take the exact opposite approach. They believe that the swelling is the body's natural healing method. When tendons, ligaments and muscles are stressed extra blood rushes to the area to repair the damage. As ugly and frightening as a swollen ankle may look, it is what is necessary to heal the body properly. Efforts taken to reduce swelling can increase healing time and may cause long-term damage. Over the next few days a homeopath may recommend adding heat and light exercise to the sprained ankle to help increase blood flow, quite the opposite advice from the allopath.

In general, allopathy seeks to fight the body's natural response system by attacking the symptoms of healing. Homeopathy, however, embraces the body's natural response system by either encouraging the symptoms of healing or attacking the root cause of the illness. Mainstream medicine, or allopathy, would have us take muscle relaxants for headaches and nasal decongestants for runny noses caused by the common cold. But these are merely treatments for the symptoms. The homeopath understands that a headache is a sign that something is wrong. Perhaps the sufferer has a low blood sugar and needs to eat something. Or maybe he or she would benefit from some exercise or a change of environment. The list of examples goes on.

A world wide vaccination program by the WHO has eradicated smallpox; insulin has enabled many type I diabetics to control their condition; antibiotics, though not without their own problems, can render potentially lethal infections harmless.

- ***Quality of care***

Homeopathy definitely has the potential to provide the same (or better) quality of care as allopathic medicine. In the past, the most brilliant physicians were the homeopaths, and homeopathic licensure had the same components as allopathic licensure (in terms of the content and length of time of training, testing and certification, a defined scope of practice, review and audit and codified disciplinary action). The fact that homeopathy does not currently have this licensure system is a reflection on the political and economic forces at work in this country, not a reflection on homeopathy itself. Licensure efforts for homeopathy are underway in a number of states, at the same time that an increasing number of already-licensed professionals are incorporating homeopathy into their practices. In other words, this objection is only a temporary one until the United States can catch up with Europe, the former Soviet States and India in providing professional training and licensure for homeopaths.

- ***Quality of products***

Random tests of supplements and herbs often show that the contents do not measure up to what is on the label. And the labels do not contain adequate warnings about the potentially toxic effects of large overdoses of some supplements and herbs. But homeopathic remedies are completely safe, non-toxic (in most potencies they don't even contain one molecule) and very inexpensive. And a true homeopath prescribes one single remedy at a time, therefore avoiding possible interactions among multiple remedies. Allopathy would do well to learn from this, since we physicians have the tendency to prescribe a multitude of drugs for various symptoms. This has never worked before and it never will, for it creates a jungle of side effects on top of the symptoms of the disease itself. And we may not forget that 100,000 deaths a year in this country are caused by conventional drugs.

- ***Quality of science***

Conventional medicine is touted as the leader in the management of infectious and surgical diseases. But allopathic medicine still does not have good weapons against cholera, for example. Yet homeopathy was already successful against the great epidemic diseases of 150 years ago: cholera, typhoid fever, diphtheria, scarlet fever. In a great flu epidemic earlier in this century, the statistics in London hospitals showed the mortality rate at allopathic hospitals was 55%, but less than 5% at homeopathic hospitals. Allopathic medicine claims to be based on the double-blind method, and discredits any form of alternative medicine which cannot fully support every remedy or procedure with double-blind research studies. Yet allopathic medicine itself violates this principle every day. Surgeries, for example, are difficult to test by this method. When surgeries are assessed by outcomes (how many people were doing better at the end of five years, for

example), millions of surgeries per year are shown to be futile or unnecessary. And sadly enough, according to allopathic research, 67% of prescriptions are made based on the side-effects of drugs-in other words, not according to the original double-blind protocol.

- In the last twenty years, homeopathy as a healing modality has gained the attention of the public. Without any doubt, homeopathy could be advanced by professional standards and greater availability of instruction to interested health care professionals. That the public has embraced alternative medicine has been proven by the excellent 1998 study by David Eisenberg of Harvard Medical School, which indicated that 70% of the population had consulted an alternative practitioner. Because of its great results in the past and present, homeopathy will undoubtedly catch the attention of patients ready to embrace a scientific approach that has proven its validity in the last two hundred years. I hope that allopathic physicians will show a serious interest in this marvelous approach before they reject it. Humankind will be the better for it!

IV HOMEOPATHY SO POPULAR BECAUSE

- Homeopathic treatment works with your body's own healing powers to bring about health and well being.
- You are treated as an individual, not as a collection of disease labels.
- Homeopathy treats all your symptoms at all levels of your being – spiritual, emotional, mental and physical and finds the 'like cures like' match for them.
- Homeopathically prepared remedies, providing the minimum dose, are gentle, subtle and powerful. They are non-addictive, and not tested on animals.

4.1 Homeopathy is not a miracle medicine

Many people believe that homeopathy is a miracle science, it can make magical cure in even most incurable diseases such as cancer, comatose stages, paralysis, etc. Actually, it is not. Homeopathy is simple a science based on certain laws (law of similars, comparable with that of vaccinations); with its own scope and limitations. There are rules, parameters and methods of application, which determine the scope of treatment.

Homeopathy is very effective but please do not expect magic or miracles.

4.2 Homeopathy is not a panacea:

One of the myths about homeopathy is that it is a cure for all, a panacea. It is not. Homeopathy enjoys all the joys of scope of its application, as well as the limitations of the science. No medical science can be a panacea.

Homeopathy can cure early stages of Rheumatoid arthritis but not the deformities, which go with it, as an example.

4.3 Homeopathy is not just the mind-based medicine:

One of the hardest concepts about homeopathy is that homeopathy is based largely on the understanding of the mind. The homeopathic fraternity is also not fully saved of this mis-belief. The study of the mental attitudes, the

emotions and the mind-set is one of the important aspects of patient-study in homeopathy. However, it is not the sole determining factor.

Many homeopaths, especially in the western world, have a delusion that homeopathy is almost identical with mind-medicine. Homeopathy study encompasses, actually, the disease, the nature of pathology, the kind of immunological or hormonal changes, the physical components (perspiration, thermal preference, sleep, etc) and the mental sphere; all or most of them put together, depending on the case.

4.4 Homeopathy is more than psychosomatic:

Many homeopaths tend to relate disease or pathology in patients to some emotional parameter, almost always as *cause and effect* phenomenon. For example, diabetes due to stress in relationship or arthritis due to grief due to death of a loved one, etc. Psychosomatism is profoundly comprehended and valued in homeopathy; however, not necessarily as a causal phenomenon, but more as a part of the totality. There is no need to forcibly connect major emotions as the cause for development of every disease in all patients.

4.5 Homeopathy is not spiritual:

Since homeopathy is based on potentised (incredibly minute) dose of the physical substance, which cannot be measured with the current scientific methods, many have theorized and connected homeopathy with spirituality. It seems interesting to read some correlation between the two; however, it may be detrimental for the growth of homeopathy if taken away from science and towards spirituality. Comparing ‘vital force’ with ‘sole’ and miasms with ‘Buddhism’ will take homeopathy away from scientific growth.

Homeopathy is not-yet-fully-understood science, so, to some, it might look like some form of spirituality.

4.5 Homeopathy is not placebo therapy:

The skeptics have always criticized homeopathy as placebo therapy, due to lack of adequate research as per modern medicine guidelines. Since the results using homeopathic medicines are fairly reproducible, measurable and documentable, I would strongly say that homeopathy is far beyond placebo therapy.

4.7 Homeopathy is not faith healing:

Next label from skeptics is that homeopathy is nothing but faith healing. Homeopathy has worked million times for those who did not believe in it. Also, babies, domestic and wild animals, respond to homeopathy; proving homeopathy to be more than placebo therapy.

Cases of Hepatitis C, for example, where objective parameter such as drastic reduction in viral load after homeopathic medicines; is very hard to achieve with faith healing.

The skeptics should try out homeopathy, I suggest.

4.8 Homeopathy is not necessarily ‘single remedy’ magic:

The homeopathic professionals have been taught to be dogmatic about the use of ‘single remedy’ at a time, for all patients, all the time. It is very hard to break this fixity and evolve from this rigid shell; which even the father of homeopathy, Dr Hahnemann, could not outgrow in his time. The homeopaths tend to be either emotional when it

comes to talking about the use of more remedies in a give case or shy away from discussing about it. The profession has yet to enter into a scientific discussion about so-called poly-pharmacy (multiple medicines).

No complex case be cured using a single remedy forever, barring only a few exceptions.

I deal with very severe pathologies such as Ulcerative colitis, Ankylosing spondylitis, Trigeminal Neuralgia, Nephrotic Syndrome, etc. where it is not possible to administer a single remedy and wait. Every delay could be detrimental and not justified.

4.9 Homeopathy is not just ‘single dose’ therapy:

‘Single remedy, single dose’ are the magic phrases found in homeopathic textbooks; no more relevant in today’s medical practice. I have practiced the said phrases very religiously for over a decade and half; and have evolved from the dogmatism.

Sticking to the idea of single remedy and single dose could even lead to criminal intransigence.

4.10 Homeopathy is not dream-based treatment:

Some teachings have led to create a cloud of delusion amongst some homeopaths, which believe that the practice of homeopathy can be based on the understanding of patient’s dreams. Study of dreams is one of the twenty odd parameters in homeopathy; one of the most unreliable, indeed. Its importance should not be over emphasized.

4.11 Most treatments do not lead to suppression:

Over importance to the theory of suppression of diseases in homeopathy is misleading, vey often. Yes, use of immunosuppressive medicines such as corticosteroids, etc. leads to suppression of immune system, eventually taking the disease to deeper levels. This is very well understood in homeopathic philosophy.

However, extension of the concept of suppression, whereby some believe that anti-fever (paracetamol, Tylenol), pain killers, antibiotics, always lead to suppression; and must always be avoided. This is not true, in my opinion. This calls for scientific debate.

4.12 Homeopathy is not that slow:

The proponents of homeopathy claim that homeopathy is not slow. Actually, this is partly true and partly not. Homeopathy is not slow in chronic diseases. It relatively slow in acute diseases and could be very slow in the treatment of critical diseases.

4.13 Homeopathy is not very fast acting medicine:

Homeopathy is not very fast, either. Let me be honest. Homeopathy is neither very fast nor very slow. We need research to make homeopathy faster, I would say.

4.14 Homeopathy is not simply ‘constitutional medicine’:

Any contradiction to concept of the constitutional medicine is a potential trigger for third world war, amongst homeopaths at least. After twenty-five years of intense homeopathic practice, I believe that the ‘constitutional medicine’ is a hype created in the profession. It calls for a review and re-evaluation. It is a huge topic, cannot be discussed in length here.

In brief, I would say, all cases may not find a constitutional medicine and can still be treated with success.

4.15 Homeopathy is not suitable for all acute and critical diseases:

One school of thought is that homeopathy can cure each a every acute and critical disease such as cerebral malaria, bacterial meningitis, acute renal failure, severe pneumonia, acute myocardial infection (heart attack), and the like.

I strongly opine that it is not true. Homeopathy is a science having a limitation whereby severe acute and critical disease situations cannot be consistently treated with success. Please read the word ‘consistently’ with emphasis. Success with some cases, on some occasions, may not be enough. The results have to be comparable with the modern medicine; in order that we ethically claim success of homeopathy in severely acute and critical illnesses.

4.16 Every disease is not curable, even if the remedy is right

Many people and some homeopaths believe that if symptoms of the patient match with some medicines, every disease becomes curable. In other words, if the medicine selection is perfect, the cure is certain; irrespective of the nature of the disease. This is not true. The curability of any disease depends on several factors such as 1. Nature of the disease. For example, hepatitis (inflammation of liver) may be curable; while cirrhosis (scarring) of liver is not curable. 2. Extent of pathological change. For example, a few patches of Alopecia Areata (hair loss patches) are curable; but total hair loss (Alopecia totalis) is not curable. 3. Reversibility of the disease process and outcome. Inflammatory arthritis can be helped but Osteoarthritis (bony overgrowth) cannot be reversed. 4. Selection of the correct homeopathic remedies.

4.17 Homeopathy is not beyond the modern medical science:

The well-evolved medical knowledge acquired by medical science is very much required for the evolution of homeopathy. Homeopathy does not claim to be beyond the modern medical science. In fact, it is high time to understand that homeopathy and medical science are not distinctly different as far as the ‘medicine’ is concerned. They are not contrary but complementary and collaborating; belonging to the same medical science.

4.18 Homeopathy is not against the modern medicine:

Some may believe that ‘modern medicine’ and homeopathy against each other, contrary; kind of enemies! I have always wondered, how such concepts have grown in the minds of medicos, homeopaths and lay-people. Homeopathy is just a science; a part of medical science.

If we look at the evolution of engineering sciences, do we believe that computer engineering is contrary to the electronics; mechanical engineering opposing to electrical or civil engineering’s? Not really. They all are complementing each other. Why don’t we have maturity when it comes to medical sciences?

4.19 Homeopathy is not against surgery:

One of the myths among laypeople, modern medicos, as well as the surgeons is that homeopathy is against surgery. Surgery is a part of homeopathy. Surgery is a science and art by itself. Surgery is neither a property of modern medicines nor of homeopathy. It has to be understood that homeopathy is a therapeutic method of treating diseases

in certain manner. Surgery is a method of treating diseases in a different manner, without medicines. Both are complementary to each other. Precisely, therefore, the homeopathic training in India trains every homeopath for basic surgery, at undergraduate level, as much as it trains a modern medico. Every qualified homeopath in India is a physician and a surgeon. This is not a case in the western world, though.

While evaluating what homeopathy is all about; it would be equally important to understand what homeopathy is not. I hope this piece of article will stimulate many.

Some patients and homeopaths are of the belief that all the diseases are equally curable using homeopathy. This is an extreme view and it needs to be discussed. All the diseases, obviously, cannot be cured using homeopathy..

Let us be very clear that homeopathy is a science and not a magic! Homeopathy has its own strength and limitations as well. The believers of homeopathy, at times, have over expectations from this science. Also, some of the homeopaths have wrong notions; wherein they promote the idea that if symptoms match, all diseases, from colds to cancer find a cure in homeopathy.

V The curability of diseases using homeopathy depends on some of the following factors, put randomly as under:

1. Nature of pathology:

All disease are not the same. The diseases can be allergic (e.g... asthma, hay fever), infective (viral, bacterial, fungal, etc), autoimmune (e.g. under active thyroid, alopecia areata), metabolic (e.g. diabetes, lactose intolerance), functional (e.g. Irritable Bowel Syndrome), structural (e.g. Ulcerative colitis), reversible (e.g. GERD, Migraine), irreversible (e.g. Hernia, Cataract, Male Pattern Baldness), benign (e.g. Chalazion, lipoma), malignant (e.g. Cancer), emotional (e.g. Anxiety neurosis, Erectile dysfunction), psychological (e.g. depression), psychosomatic (e.g. Migraine, Rheumatoid arthritis), collagen (e.g. Polymyositis, Myasthenia gravis, Muscular dystrophy), nutritional (e.g. anemia), iatrogenic (drug induced disease) (e.g. Lichen Planus, cortisone myopathy) etc. The prognosis varies based on the nature of the disease.

2. Nature of disease:

My new categories of disease will be Acute, sub acute, chronic, recurring or critical; instead of only Acute and Chronic. Most of the Acute (tonsillitis), Chronic (Eczema) and Recurring (Asthmatic Bronchitis) diseases are treatable using homeopathy. However, some of the acute diseases which are critical in nature, such as severe infection (septicemia, cerebral malaria) or heart attack (myocardial infarction) etc are not curable using homeopathy.

3. Nature of infection:

Most of the bacterial and viral infections find good treatment using homeopathy. However, severe infections such as Tuberculosis, HIV, Gonorrheal Meningitis, Typhoid, etc are better not treated using homeopathy as the conventional

treatment is more effective for them. Cases of HIV can find supportive role in homeopathy. Homeopathy is effective for bacterial infections such as abscess, tonsillitis, otitis media, recurring boils, osteomyelitis, etc. Homeopathy is also effective for viral infections such as measles, chickenpox, hepatitis A, B and C, viral warts, herpes, molluscum contagiosa, etc. Fungal infections such as tenia versicolor and tenia corporis responds to homeopathy. However, very old standing tenia corporis is often difficult to treat with any medicine. Onychomycosis is a fungal infection of nails, difficult to treat yet treatable.

4. If or not the pathological changes of the disease are functional or structural in nature:

The diseases with functional changes (Aplastic anemia, Migraine) are easy to treat by and large. The diseases with structural (Psoriatic arthritis), changes take longer to get results. Some of them are completely curable (e.g. Ulcerative colitis, Hepatitis C) while some are partly curable (Trigeminal Neuralgia), and some are incurable (e.g. Deformities in Rheumatoid arthritis).

5. If or not the pathological changes of the disease are irreversible or irreversible in nature:

Reversible disease pathology such as Psoriasis, Urticaria, Asthma are curable. The diseases with irreversible changes such as cancer can be palliated but not cured; while some of the irreversible diseases such as some forms of cancer cannot be cured or helped using homeopathy.

6. Extent and stage of the disease:

Most diseases have different stages. The success of treatment varies according to the extent and stage of the disease. For example, Vitiligo with mild extent is curable but the same disease if extensive, cannot be cured.

7. Depth of the disease:

Various diseases have varying roots in terms of the depth of the diseases. For example, some diseases such as acute urticaria is usually not deep seated; it is superficial. It can be treated quickly with success. When Urticaria becomes chronic, say five years old, and it is recurring again and again, its depth is more. This form of urticaria is still curable, but it takes time. Now, the same example of urticaria, when presents with severe form what is called as Angioedema and dermatographism, it becomes all the more difficult to treat, since its 'depth of the disease' is much more. All the diseases need to be understood in this manner.

8. Cause of the disease:

Every disease needs to be scrutinized in terms of the origin and causes such as genetic, metabolic, immunological, etc. and the prognosis can be determined accordingly.

9. Maintaining factors of the disease:

Some diseases have maintaining factors untreated. For example, cases of hair loss using hair dye or harsh shampoo will still have loss of hair, in spite of the best homeopathic treatment.

10. Current medications:

Some of the diseases are triggered or maintained by some drugs or medicines. For example, cases of psoriasis who are on beta-blockers may obstruct cure of psoriasis. Some of the strong immunosuppressive medicines such as methotrexate or cortisone may not allow the right homeopathic medicine to work in some cases such as Nephrotic Syndrome, Atopic dermatitis, Psoriasis.

11. Past medications:

Some of the strong immunosuppressive medicines such as methotrexate, cortisone, cyclophosphamide etc. may delay cure with homeopathic medicines.

12. Over all health of the patient:

If the patients general health and vitality is good, the results are better and faster.

13. Associated diseases that the patient may be having:

Associated diseases have impact on the treatment of other diseases. For example, if the patient of Alopecia areata also has Under active thyroid and/or diabetes, it takes relatively longer to get success.

14. Genetic factors:

Strong genetic tendency in the background calls for defined line of treatment and the response time may vary accordingly.

15. Life style factors:

Patients of Oral Lichen Planus continuing with smoking; or cases of IBS living erratic lifestyle will alter the response time of the treatment.

16. Selection of homeopathic medicine and its dose:

In fact the most important factor is the selection of the correct medicines for the patients, based on detailed history and understating of the totality. Also, correct medicine in right dose and correct repetition, will make the cure successful.

17. Patient's compliance:

It is important to have patient's active participation and compliance in the process of cure.

VI THE STATUS OF HOMEOPATHY RESEARCH

Most rigorous clinical trials and systematic analyses of the research on homeopathy have concluded that there is little evidence to support homeopathy as an effective treatment for any specific condition.

A 2015 comprehensive assessment of evidence by the Australian government's National Health and Medical Research Council concluded that there are no health conditions for which there is reliable evidence that homeopathy is effective.

Homeopathy is a controversial topic in complementary medicine research. A number of the key concepts of homeopathy are not consistent with fundamental concepts of chemistry and physics. For example, it is not possible to explain in scientific terms how a remedy containing little or no active ingredient can have any effect. This, in turn, creates major challenges to rigorous clinical investigation of homeopathic remedies. For example, one cannot confirm that an extremely dilute remedy contains what is listed on the label, or develop objective measures that show effects of extremely dilute remedies in the human body.

Another research challenge is that homeopathic treatments are highly individualized, and there is no uniform prescribing standard for homeopathic practitioners. There are hundreds of different homeopathic remedies, which can be prescribed in a variety of different dilutions for thousands of symptoms.

VII CONCLUSION

An integrative approach in which conventional treatments and homeopathic medicines are used can be highly beneficial in the treatment of numerous conditions. Using homeopathic medicines as a first mode of treatment in non-emergency primary care would lead to its application in a wide, even a very wide, assortment of acute care. At the most extreme extent, one could say that homeopathic medicines can and should be considered whenever some type of heroic medical treatment is not necessary. At the other end, one could say that homeopathic medicines can and should be considered only when there is no evidence that the benefits of a conventional medical treatment outweigh its potential side effects. Ultimately, the role of the clinician is to inform patients of the risks and benefits from the various potential treatments available. Sadly, while there may be a body of research to show that certain conventional medical treatments are effective in treating a specific disease, a symptom, or a laboratory reading, this does not necessarily mean that this treatment actually improves the overall health of people. The same limitation can be said about homeopathic research to date. There is presently inadequate research about real healing. It is indeed difficult for clinicians to provide patients with hard and fast data for making easy decisions. Clinicians must, therefore, be humble, and they should remember the words of Hippocrates who insisted that physicians should: "First, do no harm."

REFERENCES

1. Jennifer Jacobs, L. Margarita Jimenez, Stephen S. Gloyd, "Treatment of Acute Childhood Diarrhea with Homeopathic Medicine: A Randomized Clinical Trial in Nicaragua," *Pediatrics*, May 1994, 93, 5:719-25.
2. David Reilly, Morag Taylor, Neil Beattie, et al., "Is Evidence for Homoeopathy Reproducible?" *Lancet*, December 10, 1994, 344:1601-16.
3. A.R Khuda-Bukhsh, S. Banik, "Assessment of Cytogenetic Damage in X-irradiated Mice and its Alteration by Oral Administration of Potentized Homeopathic Drug, Ginseng D200," *Berlin Journal of Research in Homeopathy*, 1991, 1, 4/5:254. Also A.R. Khuda-Bukhsh and S. Maity, "Alteration of Cytogenetic Effects by Oral Administration of Potentized Homeopathic Drug, Ruta graveolens in Mice Exposed to Sub-lethal X-radiation," *Berlin Journal of Research in Homeopathy*, 1991, 1, 4/5:264.
4. Altunc U, Pittler MH, Ernst E. Homeopathy for childhood and adolescence ailments: systematic review of randomized clinical trials. *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*. 2007;81(1):69–75.
5. Black LI, Clarke TC, Barnes PM, Stussman BJ, Nahin RL. Use of complementary health approaches among children aged 4–17 years in the United States: National Health Interview Survey, 2007–2012 (300KB PDF). *National health statistics reports*; no 78. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2015.
6. Clarke TC, Black LI, Stussman BJ, Barnes PM, Nahin RL. Trends in the use of complementary health approaches among adults: United States, 2002–2012 (240KB PDF). *National health statistics reports*; no 79. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2015.
7. Cucherat M, Haugh MC, Gooch M, et al. Evidence of clinical efficacy of homeopathy: a meta-analysis of clinical trials. *European Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*. 2000;56(1):27–33.
8. Der Marderosian AH. Understanding homeopathy. *Journal of the American Pharmaceutical Association*. 1996;NS36(5):317–321.
9. Ernst E. A systematic review of systematic reviews of homeopathy. *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*. 2002;54(6):577–582.
10. Ernst E. Homeopathy: what does the “best” evidence tell us? *Medical Journal of Australia*. 2010;192(8):458–460.
11. Ernst E. The truth about homeopathy. *British Journal of Clinical Pharmacology*. 2007;65(2):163–164.
12. Jonas WB, Kaptchuk TJ, Linde K. A critical overview of homeopathy. *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 2003;138(5):393–399.
13. Kuehn BM. Despite health claims by manufacturers, little oversight for homeopathic products. *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2009;302(15):1631–1634.
14. Merrell WC, Shalts E. Homeopathy. *Medical Clinics of North America*. 2002;86(1):47–62.

15. Nahin, RL, Barnes PM, Stussman BJ, and Bloom B. Costs of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) and Frequency of Visits to CAM Practitioners: United States, 2007. National health statistics reports; no 18. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2009.
16. National Health and Medical Research Council (Australian Government). NHMRC Information Paper: Evidence on the Effectiveness of Homeopathy for Treating Health Conditions. National Health and Medical Research Council Web site. Accessed at www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines-publications/cam02 on April 17, 2015.
17. Posadzki P, Alotaibi A, Ernst E. Adverse effects of homeopathy: a systematic review of published case reports and case series. *The International Journal of Clinical Practice*. 2012;66(12):1178–1188.
18. Rowe T. Homeopathy. In: Goldblatt E, Snider P, Quinn S, et al., eds. *Clinicians' and Educators' Desk Reference on the Licensed Complementary and Alternative Healthcare Professions*. Seattle, WA: Academic Consortium for Complementary and Alternative Health Care; 2009.
19. Shang A, Huwiler-Müntener K, Nartey L, et al. Are the clinical effects of homoeopathy placebo effects? Comparative study of placebo-controlled trials of homoeopathy and allopathy. *Lancet*. 2005;366(9487):726–732.
20. Tedesco P, Cicchetti J. Like cures like: homeopathy. *American Journal of Nursing*. 2001;101(9):43–49.
21. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Manual of Compliance Policy Guides. Sec. 400.400. Conditions Under Which Homeopathic Drugs May Be Marketed. U.S. Food and Drug Administration Web site. Accessed at www.fda.gov/ICECI/ComplianceManuals/CompliancePolicyGuidanceManual/ucm074360.htm on March 22, 2012.
22. Vallance AK. Can biological activity be maintained at ultra-high dilution? An overview of homeopathy, evidence, and Bayesian philosophy. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. 1998;4(1):49–76.