



Use of External Applications in Homoeopathic Practice

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ABSTRACT

A homoeopathic medicine, as any other drug substance, works internally, irrespective of the route through which it is introduced into the body. Even if a drug is applied externally as a local medication, it will be absorbed into the body fluids through capillary systems, conveyed through blood, lymph or other transport systems, undergo bio-chemical changes, and acts on various target molecules, according to the configuration of their constituent molecules. This is true whether it is applied on the tongue or on the skin. Hence the term external application is a misnomer. Even if we decide to use a homoeopathic medicine externally, it would be ideal to use a simillimum, in potentized form, selected on the basis of symptomatology. In the case of mother tinctures and low potencies, their usage should be considered only if intend to apply the medicine in its crude form itself. In that case, even though we may get some palliations, it will not be much different from allopathy or ayurveda, and cannot be called a legitimate homoeopathic practice. We should bear in mind the fact that when we apply homoeopathic drugs, as external applications, they act on the basis of therapeutic principle of 'Similia Similibus Curentur'. It is an absolute blunder to consider that medicines used externally on the skin act only on the skin. The homoeopathic ointments, hair tonics, creams and toilet soaps flooding the market are to be seen as the growing trend of unethical commercialization of homoeopathy. Homoeopaths should fight this trend with all their might.

Keywords : External Application, Ointment, Liniment, Homoeopathy and Pharmacy

Introduction

Homeopathy is a scientific method of treatment which is based on the application of the law of similars. For thousands of years, man searched for a method to promote Healing which is efficient, gentle and permanent. Samuel Hahnemann, a German Physician who lived between 1755-1843, pursued this philosophical and scientific Quest by developing an ideal system of therapeutics by bringing together a number of discoveries and reflections found throughout the history of medicine. After years of perfecting this therapeutic method, he called it homeopathy,

Homeopathy consists of treating sick people with remedies which, in crude doses, Would produce in healthy people symptoms similar (homoios) to those of the disease needed to be overcome. Homeopathic medicine is curative, safe, holistic, non-invasive, non-toxic, and non-Addictive, and can be used in conjunction with regular medicine for children.

Homeopathy treats many medical problems and other diseases successfully with Remedies and without doctor's medical intervention.

Homeopathy increases the vitality and the life force that animates you. Homeopathic medicine improves your immune system functions, therefore becoming more vulnerable to disease, both physical and mental.

Homoeopathic treatment will place the hallowed name of Samuel Hahnemann on the highest pinnacles of everlasting fame, and hail his matchless discovery of the 'Law of Similar' as a merciful manifestation of providential goodness to restore the weak, the halt and the blind, to a state of health and harmonious order.

Material and Methods

Sources of data:

The subjects for this study have been selected from those patients with the various complaints who attended in the O.P.D. as per the inclusion criteria.

Method of collection of data:

- Clinical history.
- All the patients were subjected based on the Clinical presentation, Clinical examination
- All cases were recorded and processed on the standardized case record.
- Treatment has been given Homoeopathically,
- A total of 30 cases were selected for this study from the OPD.
- The simillimum has been selected by appropriate methods.
- The samples were divided randomly into high and low potency groups.

- The follow-up criteria have been drawn up in advance, to study the manner and rate of response of the symptoms in both the groups.
- In most of the cases a start was made with low potency and observed for 3-4 weeks or more. Then they were switched on to high or higher potencies to find out the speed of improvement and duration of the period of relief.
- In this study I have considered the potencies upto 30c as lower potency and the potencies 200C and above as higher potency with suitable external application.
- Data receiving: Each patient will be given adequate time and data will be elicited in comprehensive manner as to elicit proper Patient's picture in the disease.
- Processing of the case will be done as per the principles and guidelines of Homoeopathy.
- References from Repertory will be availed for the selection of a remedies. All the cases will be followed up for sufficient period required as per the guidelines from Organon of Medicine and Homoeopathic Philosophy.
- References from materia medica will be availed for selection of a single remedy out of indicated group of remedies.
- Summary will be drawn after study of all relevant patients.
- Result and discussions.
- Summery and conclusion will be drawn by applying the statistics in concern to the topic.

Review of Literature

From time immemorial, local applications have been used among physicians from Aesculapius down to the present day. This method of treatment was based on the teaching and general belief that if the outward manifestations were removed, the disease was cured. But Hahnemann, after his new discovery of homoeopathy, proclaimed that external application is nothing but the outward reflexion of the internal derangement of the spiritual dynamic vital force which, when disturbed, expresses itself on the surface as signs.

External applications are not in the strict principle of homoeopathy; Treatment of diseases by internal medication is the specialty of homoeopathy. Diseases manifest itself by signs and symptoms, which are the sole guide of our homoeopathic method of treatment.

No disease is external or local. The immaterial spirit-like vital force throws out the internal malady on the external surface. The nature of external symptoms indicate the nature of internal sickness. By removal of external affections by external application the disease is never cured. On the other hand, they may attack some vital organs of our body and as a result we lose the image of the diseases. But for accidental cases, injuries, lacerations, burns etc. we need some local cleansing and dressing of the part.

Master Hahnemann gives some arguments against the external applications in his 'Organon of Medicine' (5th edition) in Sec. 196 to Sec. 203. But later on he saw the necessity of external application, while advocating the administration of medicine per mouth. He feels that oral route is not the only route for administration of medicine.

So he clearly explains, in the 6th edition of Organon of Medicine, in Sec. 284 and Sec. 285, about the use of external application. He said that curative remedy should be continued internally while the same remedy is used externally as an ointment, liniment, lotion, cerate etc.

Note: In inveterate and difficult cases of Syccosis (when the Syccosis remains along with the excrescences) Thuja may be applied externally, This is the only condition where external application of medicine has been advocated by Hahnemann.

Tenets of Organon Towards The Employment of External Applications

In his Organon of Medicine, Hahnemann describes about the external applications.

In the 5th edition of 'Organon of Medicine' we see Hahnemann's arguments against the external applications, i.e., disadvantages of external applications from Sec. 196 to Sec: 203.

Sec. 196-Sec. 197: Administration of truly homoeopathic medicine both internally and externally, simultaneously It may be argued that in such topical lesions (so called local diseases), local application of drug, which is curable along with internal application, may be more beneficial. The greatest advantage of this local application is that; the local symptoms will disappear sooner than the internal symptoms. This was often thought that complete cure has been done.

Due to this premature disappearance of the local symptoms, it is difficult and impossible to determine whether the internal disease has also been cured by internal medicine or not.

Sec. 198 : Administration of suitable homoeopathic medicine only externally

Only topical application in these local diseases are also in admissible because of the above reasons, moreover, after removal of the local symptoms, by a topical application. We will have to deal with less characteristic, less striking and more fluctuating indistinct internal symptoms to select our remedy which will no doubt be very difficult.

Only external applications to local diseases of miasmatic origin.



Removal of local affections, but the too indefinite uncharacteristic and inconstant symptoms are left behind.



No clear picture of the case is available.



Difficult to individualise the case.



Difficult to treat.

Sec. 199 : Removal of local disease surgery or corroding or drying agent before, selection of a homoeopathic remedy Then the case becomes much more difficult as the most characteristic symptoms are removed and only too indefinite (uncharacteristic) and inconstant symptoms are left out to decide on a remedy. Hence after the external principal symptom has been removed from our observation, we, deprived of that feature of the case which would have determined the selection of homoeopathic remedy, the internal use of which could have annihilated the disease completely.

Sec. 200 : The persistence of the local affection during its internal treatment would have shown that the cure was not : completed. If it is removed by internal medicine this would be a convincing proof that the entire disease has been fully cured – an inestimable, indispensable advantage. But we have to lose this advantage, if we remove the local disease by external applications.

Sec. 201 : Local symptom, enlarged by vital-force, lessens internal disease

When man's vital-force is encumbered with a chronic disease which is unable to overcome by its own powers, it instinctively adopts the plan of developing a local malady on some external part. This is solely for the object that by making and keeping in a diseased state this part which is not indispensable to human life, it may thereby silence the internal disease, which otherwise threatens to destroy the vital organs and to deprive the patient of life. It may thereby, so to speak, transfer the internal disease to the vicarious local affection and, as it were, draw it thither. The presence of the local affection thus silences, for a time, the internal disease, though without being able either to cure it or to diminish it materially.

The local affection, however, is never anything else than a part of the general disease. If the internal disease continues gradually to increase, nature is constrained to enlarge and aggravate the local symptom always more and more, in order that it may still suffice as a substitute for the increased internal disease and may still keep it under.

Sec. 202 : When the local symptom is destroyed by the topical application of external remedies then the dormant internal malady is roused up, which had previously co-existed with the affection.

Sec. 203 : Nature tries to protect more vital organs by throwing out everything on the less important organs and on the external surface. But the application of external medicine alters and reverses the mechanism. As a result the more important vital organs are affected and damaged. Thus, it becomes the source of thousands of named and unnamed human chronic maladies.

Sec. 203 (Foot note: 1) External removal with internal administration of dissimilar medicines cannot cure but weakens the organism and serves to add artificial chronic disease.

In 6th edition of 'Organon of Medicine', Dr. Hahnemann wrote in favour of external application, from Sec. 284 to Sec. 285.

Sec. 284 : Absorption of medicine

Besides the tongue, mouth and stomach, which most commonly absorb the medicine, the nose and respiratory organs are receptive of the action of medicine in fluid form by means of olfaction and inhalation through the mouth.

But the whole remaining skin of the body, clothed with epidermis, is adapted to the action of medicinal solutions, especially if the inunction is connected with simultaneous internal administration.

Sec. 285 : The cure of very old diseases may be furthered by the physical application externally in the back, arms, extremities by rubbing the same medicine he gives internally and which showed itself curatively. In doing so, he must but avoid parts subject to pain or spasm or skin eruption.

From this fact may be explained those marvelous cures, however infrequent, where chronic deformed patients, whose skin nevertheless was sound and clean, were cured quickly and permanently after a few baths whose medicinal constituents by chance were homoeopathically related.

N.B. : Sec. 285 of the 6th edition of Organon has no corresponding aphorism in its 5th edition.

Sec. 282 : If the fig-warts have existed for sometime without treatment, they will need for their perfect cure, the external application of their specific medicines as well as internal use at the same time.

COMPONENTS OF EXTERNAL APPLICATIONS

The following are the most important of the components :

(A) Liquid vehicles used for external

applications :

1. Purified water
2. Glycerin
3. Olive oil
4. Almond oil
5. Rosemary oil
6. Sesame or Teel oil.

(B) Semi-solid vehicles used for external applications :

1. Vaseline (soft-paraffin).
 - (i) Yellow soft paraffin
 - (ii) White soft paraffin
2. Waxes
 - (a) Bees waxes-
 - (i) Yellow bees wax
 - (ii) White bees wax
 - (b) Spermaceti
 - (c) Lanolin (anhydrous)
3. Prepared lard
4. Isinglass.
5. Soap-
 - (i) Soft soap
 - (ii) Hard soap
 - (iii) Curd soap
6. Starch.

List of External applications

1. Glyceroles	2. Cerates
3. Ointments	4. Poultices
5. Liniments	6. Fomentations
7. Opodeldocs	8. Plasters
9. Lotions	

N.B. : For description of the above vehicles.

10. Oils
 (i) Oil Bouchi (ii) Oil Mullein
 (iii) Oil Olive (iv) Oil Rosemary
 (v) Arnica hair oil (vi) Oil of Winter green
11. Injections (i) Rectal
 (ii) Urethral
 (iii) Vaginal
- Surgical dressings.

Observations**Table No. 01**

Table showing the distribution of cases according to age and sex.

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Percentage
00-10	03	05	08	26.66%
11-20	02	02	04	13.33%
21-30	02	05	07	23.33%
31-40	02	05	07	23.33%
41-50	02	00	02	06.66%
51-60	00	02	02	06.66%
Total	11	19	30	100%

Table No. 02

Table showing the distribution of cases according to Married and Unmarried

	Married	Unmarried	Total	Percentage
Male	06	05	11	36.66%
Female	10	09	19	63.33%
Total	16	14	30	100.00%

Table No. 03

Table showing the distribution of cases according to Occupation

Sr. No.	Occupation	No. of Cases	Percentage
1	Artist	01	03.33%
2	Business	01	03.33%
3	Doctor	01	03.33%
4	Housewife	03	10.00%
5	Service	09	30.00%
6	Student	12	40.00%
7	Teacher	02	06.66%
8	None	01	03.33%
	Total	30	100.00%

Table No. 04**Table showing the distribution of cases according to Constitutional Remedies Prescribed**

Sr. No	Remedy	No of Cases	Percentage
1.	Apis Mel	02	06.66%
2.	Arsenic Album	03	10.00%
3.	Aurum Metallicum	01	03.33%
4.	Baryta Carb	02	06.66%
5.	Bryonia alba	01	03.33%
6.	Calc. Carb	02	06.66%
7.	Calcarea Silicata	01	03.33%
8.	Ignatia	01	03.33%
9.	Kali carb	01	03.33%
10.	Natrum Mur	02	06.66%
11.	Nux Vomica	02	06.66%
12.	Phosphorous	02	06.66%
13.	Pulsatilla	01	03.33%
14.	Rhus Tox	03	10.00%
15.	Sepia	01	03.33%
16.	Staphisagria	01	03.33%
17.	Sulphur	02	06.66%
18.	Urticaria Urens	01	03.33%
19.	Veratrum alb	01	03.33%
	<hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> Total	30	100.00%

Table No. 05**Table showing the distribution of cases according to External Application Used**

Sr. No.	External Application	No of Cases
1	Apis Mel ointment	02
2	Arnica Ointment	01
3	Calendula Ointment	09
4	Graphites Ointment	03
5	Rhus Tox Liniment	01
6	Rhus Tox Ointment	02
7	Sulphur Ointment	03
8	Urtica Urens Ointment	02
9	No External Application	07
	<hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/> Total	30

Table No. 06

Table showing the Result of cases.

Recovered	Improved	Discontinued	Total
14	15	01	30

Summary & Conclusion

Since the many problems were treated on the basis of the constitutional type of the patient, the cure is supposed to be at a deeper level, which is expected to strengthen the immune system making the patient stronger and healthier. Entire homeopathy treatment, is based on the natural law of cure, is essentially safe and absolutely harmless.

The homoeopathic remedy which is selected in every case after detail study, brings about harmony at the constitutional level & at immunological level bringing normalcy to the patient.

Can Homoeopathic medicine be given by the external route in human body? Hahnemann advises in Organon of medicine, fifth edition, that the Homoeopathic medicine can be given by the external routes. In aphorism 288, Hahnemann writes that when Homoeopathic medicine is introduced orally, it first affects tongue, mouth and stomach. Hahnemann advises to introduce Homoeopathic medicine through Nasal inhalation or mouth inhalation in this Para. He writes more elaborately in the footnotes under same aphorisms. In fact, Hahnemann perhaps faced the problem with the nature of patient to avoid taking the medicine orally, as we faces even today. Patient generally is not willing to take the medicine frequently and avoid the repetition. In this Para, footnote deals with the process of the application of the Homoeopathic medicine.

Now what I do, I advise to patient to take the potentised dilution of the selected Homoeopathic medicine. I generally used two, three or four medicine at a time, unless and until I am not sure for a prescription of single medicine according to rule of Hahnemann, because I would not like to take risk with the life of patient for the sake of saving Hahnemannian philosophy. I give the medicine orally in the potency and I advise patient to rub the potentised dilution of selected one medicine on face, selected second medicine on right arm, selected third medicine on left arm, selected fourth medicine on the sides of abdomen or in-between the gap of epigastria and navel. These potentised dilutions prepared with the alcohol dry quickly but their affects are very miraculous. This method suggested by the Hahnemann works miraculously and patient does not feel any botheration for taking regular medications in frequent intervals.

Here we see, how Hahnemann have experimented the use of medicine through external route. He also advises to inhale the medicine through nose and mouth. That's why I am using Homoeopathic medicine through nebuliser.

When patient is not in a position to tell his complaints to Physician, what should be action taken by the physician to save the life of sick personal ? There could be many ways for application of medicine, here what I experienced in practice, the routes of the application of Homoeopathic remedies.

It will be of interest to note that the homeopathy medicines are essentially oral and not in the form of creams, lotions or any local application on the skin.

The patients coming in the age group of 00-60 years were considered for this study and the patient belonging to both the sexes and to different socio-economic groups were taken as per inclusion criteria. A total of 30 cases were selected. Minimum duration of the study was 3-19 months. The statistical analysis made here is based on the data obtained from over all thirty cases above mentioned.

Out of the thirty randomly selected cases, the majority of the patients belonging to the age group 00-40 years. This constitutes 26.66% of the total sample population 00-10 years, 23.33% of the total sample population 21-30 years and 31-40, 13.33% of the total sample population 11-20 years and 06.66% of the total sample population 41-50 years and 51-60 years.

By occupation 40.00% of patients were Student, 30.00% were in service, 10% of patient were housewife, 06.66% of patients were Teacher. 03.33% of patients each by Artist, Businessmen and Doctor.

In this study the majority of the cases were females 19 (63.33%) and the males were 11 (36.66%). Out of them 16 (53.33%) were married and 14 (46.66%) were unmarried.

In 10% of cases it was found that Arsenic Album and Rhus Tox were the indicated drug. 06.66% of cases required remedies like Apis, Baryta Carb, Calcarea Carb, Natrum Muriaticum, Nux Vomica, Phosphorus and Sulphur each. In 03.33% of cases remedies like Aurum Met., Bryonia Alba, Calcarea Silicata, Ignatia, Kali Carb, Pulsatilla, Sepia, Staphisagria, Urtica Urens and Veratrum Album each were the indicated drugs

Medicine used for the treatment is on the basis of homoeopathic principle i.e. on the constitutional level and each case was studied individually. Acute medicine used in acute condition where it indicated. The indicated remedy in most of cases were given in 200 potency and increased to higher potency if required.

Out of 30 cases 14 cases were totally *free from* their ailments at the end of the study. It forms a cure rate of 47%. 15 cases were found to have significant improvement after completion of treatment and it forms a 50% of over all improvement and 03% of cases discontinued the treatment. From the analysis of the above results obtained, it is obvious that, the Homoeopathic drugs are very effective in the treatment of the cases to find out the simillimum on the basis of Constitution. As far as External applications are concern up to certain level these helps to the patient, but constitutional remedies are better.

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