



Review of Role of Homoeopathy in Down's Syndrome- A Chromosomal Anomaly

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ABSTRACT

Down Syndrome is the most common chromosomal anomaly, defined by the presence of an extra copy of chromosome 21. It represents itself with distinctive morphological features. Children with Down's syndrome may suffer from various complications, from frequent respiratory tract infections to behavioral disorders, developmental delays etc. This article provides an insight on how individualized homoeopathic treatment can help these children. It talks about various commonly indicated remedies in children with developmental delays and their indications. Homoeopathy with its individualized approach can surely help patients with Down's syndrome in achieving their optimal potential and leading an independent life.

Keywords: Down's Syndrome, Homoeopathy, Chromosomal Abnormality, Trisomy 21, Individualized treatment

1. Introduction

The most prevalent chromosomal condition is called Down's syndrome (Trisomy 21), and it was initially described in 1866 by Dr. John Langhan Down^[1]. It is characterized by an additional copy of chromosome 21.

The exact etiology is unknown. Its occurrence varies in different population (1 in 800 to 1 in 1000 live births).^[1] The risk of having trisomy 21 increases with increasing maternal age. It also increases if the carrier parents have translocation and already have one child with Down's syndrome.

1.1 CLASSIFICATION-

There are three types of Down's Syndrome. They are as follows:

1. TRISOMY 21/NONDISJUNCTIONAL- Most common type (95%), where every cell in the body has three copies of chromosome 21 instead of two.
2. TRANSLOCATION DOWN SYNDROME- In this type (2-4%), each cell has part of an extra chromosome 21, or an entirely extra one. But it's attached to another chromosome instead of being on its own.
3. MOSAIC DOWN SYNDROME- This is the rarest type (1%), where only some cells have an extra chromosome 21.

1.2 CLINICAL FEATURES:

The characteristic dysmorphic features of Down's syndrome:

1. Up slanting palpebral fissures
2. Epicanthic folds
3. Flat facial profile
4. Depressed nasal bridge
5. Dysplastic / low set ears
6. Brachycephaly
7. Brushfield spots
8. Protruding & furrowed tongue

9. Narrowed palate
10. Short neck
11. Excessive skin at nape of neck
12. Short and broad hand
13. Transverse palmar crease (simian crease)
14. Incurved fifth finger with hypoplastic middle phalanx (clinodactyly)
15. Space between first and second toes (sandal gap)
16. Hyper flexibility of joints

1.3 COMPLICATIONS-

Common complications of down syndrome-^[2] Mood disorders, aggression, Depressive mood, lack of interest, Delayed developmental milestones, Refractive errors, visual impairment, Hearing impairment, Otitis media (ear pain, discharge), Coeliac disease, Constipation, Recurrent adenoids, tonsillitis, Recurrent upper respiratory tract infections, Hypothyroidism, Atlanto-axial instability, Disturbed sleep, obstructive sleep apnea, Obesity, Skin infections like eczema, atopic dermatitis, dry skin, Anemia, Enuresis, urinary incontinence, Intellectual disability, Developmental delay, Behavioural and psychiatric problems.

2. ROLE OF HOMOEOPATHY

2.1 Case taking in cases with Down's Syndrome

Dr. Kent said, 'A well taken case is half cured.' Case taking is the most crucial part. According to aphorism 82 ^[3], individualization in each and every case is essential, irrespective of the name of disease. Mental and physical symptoms of the patient are of most value. In such cases, intrauterine history becomes important as well. Mother's emotional state during pregnancy (esp. first trimester for congenital anomalies)- relation with husband, relation with family, attitude of close friends, economic status, not wanting a child/ particular sex, wanting miscarriage or abortion, scorn for child (illegitimate or inter racial etc.)- should be inquired. ^[4] Timing of attainment of milestones in the child also holds great value. Following is a table comparing range for attaining milestones in normal children and those with down's syndrome ^[5]:

TABLE 1- MILESTONES

Milestone	Range for Down Syndrome	Typical Range
Sits Alone	6-36 months	5-9 months
Crawls	8-22 months	6-12 months
Stands	1-3.25 years	8-17 months
Walks Alone	1-4 years	9-18 months
First Word	1-4 years	1-2 years
Two Word Phrases	2-7.5 years	15-32 months
Responsive Smile	1-5 months	1-3 months
Finger Feeds	10-24 months	7-15 months
Uses Spoon	13-39 months	12-20 months
Bowel Control	2-7 years	16-42 months
Drinks from Cup (unassisted)	12-32 months	9-18 months
Dresses Self (unassisted)	3.5-8.5 years	3.25-5 years

2.2 Case analysis is the next step.

Following are some of the relevant rubrics found in Synthesis repertory ^[6]:

1. Generals - Down Syndrome

2. Mind - Childish Behavior
3. Generals - Development – Slow

2.3 Previous Research Findings-

Various research studies have shown role of homeopathic remedies in significant improvement in cases with down's syndrome. Improvement in mental retardation, lowered immunity, delayed milestones, and gastric complaints was observed in the patients. It helped 48 children with Down's syndrome achieve their maximum potential, fostering their independence and overall well-being.^[7] Physical symptoms and problems such as stammering and enuresis also improved.^[8] In 5 children with Down's syndrome, complaints like blepharitis, lack of drive, plantar wart, urinary incontinence, refusal to work, stubbornness, susceptibility of infection, depression. Medicines prescribed to these patients and found effective were *Sulphur* 30, *Graphites* 12X, *Antimonium crudum* 12 X, *Tuberculinum* 200, *Silicea* 12X and *Ignatia* 30.^[8] 5 children with Down's syndrome, with complaints like asthma attacks, adenoids, tonsillitis, skin allergies, facial muscle hypotonia, mongolian features, low immunity, mood disorders, delayed speech, respiratory tract infections etc., responded well to homeopathic remedies like *Sulphur* 30, *Oleum jecoris* C5, *Tarentula hispanica* 30 and 1M, *Pulsatilla* 30, and Peter Chappell's 'Source Resonances'.^[9]

3. DISCUSSION

Down's syndrome is the most common chromosomal anomaly. There are many diagnostic techniques for antenatal screenings to pre-identify the child with Down's syndrome, e.g., triple marker test which has a detection rate up to 69%. Even after antenatal screening, few children are born with Down's Syndrome. Although there have been various newer advancements in medical care of children with Down's syndrome yet, only symptomatic relief and management of complications like hypothyroidism, myopathies, ear and eye problems etc is provided. But a proper treatment for the symptoms which they suffer lifelong due to genetic derangement is a lesser explored area in the modern system of medicine.

Homeopathy with its holistic approach and Individualised treatment treats man in disease, not disease in man. Homeopathy focuses on individual as a whole and not separate units or organs. The aim is to cure the patient, to restore the health and to work on vital force and improve the immunity and quality of life of the patient. Though there is a need for intensive research studies to assess role of homeopathy in children with Down's Syndrome, the existing studies show its huge potential and scope in such chromosomal abnormalities.

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