

27-9-2024

Research highlights

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How to cite this article

Valentina A. Research highlights. Indian J Res Homoeopathy 2024;18:222-225.

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Research highlights

Abstract

Research Highlights

Acknowledgments and Source of Funding

Nil

Research highlights

TREATMENT OF KNEE OSTEOARTHRITIS WITH INDIVIDUALISED HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICINES

Title: Individualised Homeopathic Medicines in the Treatment of Knee Osteoarthritis: A Double-Blind, Randomised, Placebo-Controlled Feasibility Trial^[1]

Authors: Soumya Bhattacharyya, Chandrima Chatterjee, Subhranil Saha, Satyajit Naskar, Pulakendu Bhattacharya, S. K. Monsur Alam, Sumana Sengupta, Sabir Ahamed, Abdur R. Shaikh, Munmun Koley, Priyanka Ghosh, Shyamal K. Mukherjee

Journal: Homeopathy. DOI: 10.1055/s-0043-1771025

Summary: The purpose of this study was to assess the viability of performing a 1:1 randomised controlled trial on knee osteoarthritis (OA) in 40 individuals. During the trial, all of these individuals were permitted to use concurrent medications. The Knee Injury and Osteoarthritis Outcome Score (KOOS) was considered as the main outcome measure. From KOOS, scores for the Western Ontario and McMaster University Arthritis Index (WOMAC) were also obtained. The Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) and the EQ-5D-5L questionnaire comprise the secondary result. Every measurement was recorded at baseline and following a 2-month course of therapy. The percentages of trial retention and enrolment/screening were 85% and 43%, respectively. Group differences were statistically significant, with individualised homeopathic medicines (IHMs) preferring over placebos on all KOOS subscales: Activities of daily life ($P < 0.001$), pain ($P = 0.002$), symptoms ($P < 0.001$), sports or leisure ($P = 0.016$) and quality of life ($P = 0.002$). IHMs were preferred above placebos based on the derived WOMAC values from KOOS: Stiffness ($P < 0.001$) and pain ($P < 0.001$). Significant results were also obtained with EQ-5D-5L questionnaire score ($p < 0.001$) and EQ-5D-5L VAS ratings ($p < 0.001$) favouring IHMs over placebos. The effect sizes were all in the range of moderate to big. The most often recommended homeopathic drug was *Sulphur*.

Comments: When treating knee OA, it was discovered that IHMs had a better outcome than placebos. In the future, a larger population study will be needed to confirm that IHMs are effective in treating degenerative diseases like OA in the knee.

HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICINES PREVENT ACUTE RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTION IN CHILDREN

Title: Homeopathic medicinal products for preventing and treating acute respiratory tract infections in children^[2]

Authors: K. Hawke, D. King, M. L. van Driel, T. M. McGuire

Journal: Cochrane Database Systematic Review, DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD005974.pub5

Summary: Eight RCTs with 1562 children receiving oral homeopathic medications or a control treatment for upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs) were included in this study. After receiving therapy for one to 3 months and being monitored for the rest of the year, four treatment studies looked at the impact on URTI recovery, while four studies looked at the impact on URTI prevention. Homeopathic individualisation was used in two treatments and two preventative studies. There was no significant and consistent benefit found for cure, disease severity, recurrence of acute respiratory tract infections (ARTIs) or any of the secondary outcomes defined for this review in any of the eight included studies that evaluated a range of oral homeopathic medicinal products for treating and preventing ARTIs in children. It discovered low-quality evidence that Homeopathy has little effect on the need to use antibiotics ($n = 369$; odds ratio [OR]: 0.79, 95% confidence interval [CI]: 0.35–1.76) from two individualised preventive studies. Two pooled individualised treatment studies ($n = 155$) yielded insufficient evidence to assess the impact of Homeopathy on long-term cure rates (OR: 0.99, 95% CI: 0.10–9.67; very low-quality evidence) and short-term cure rates (OR: 1.31 favouring placebo, 95% CI: 0.09–19.54).

Comments: These review findings do not reveal any positive conclusion related to homeopathic medicines. Therefore, well-designed clinical trials taking into account proper dose planning, duration of therapy, validated symptom scales for an outcome assessment and other evidence-based features will make for valuable future meta-analyses in future.

HOMOEOPATHY IS NOT A PLACEBO

Title: Homeopathy is not placebo effect: Proof of the scientific evidence for homeopathy in open access trilingual e-book^[3]

Author: Marcus Zulian Teixeira

Journal: Clinics DOI: 10.1016/j.clinsp.2024.100456

Summary: As homeopathy is founded on different principles than conventional medicine, it is frequently criticised and attacked by those who consistently reject homeopathic presumptions and any supporting scientific data. Their denialism and biased viewpoint obstructs an accurate and impartial analysis. This review article covers a wide range of topics related to homeopathic research, including observational studies, randomised controlled clinical trials, experimental studies in biological models, pharmacological underpinnings of the principle of similitude, systematic reviews and meta-analyses and homeopathic clinical epidemiology.

Modern pharmacology and the homoeopathic model are used to explore the concept of therapeutic similitude. Numerous scientific and clinical investigations support the healing impact (vital reaction) of homoeopathic medicine in line with the modern drug industry's rebound effect (paradoxical reaction of the body). Numerous controlled experimental studies in cells, plants and animals have been conducted in the field of basic Homoeopathy research, demonstrating the superiority of homoeopathic medicine's effect over control groups and proving through systematic reviews and meta-analyses that "homoeopathy is not placebo effect." Homoeopathy can reduce symptomatic manifestations and the propensity to become ill, act as an integrative and complementary therapy to other specialities and increase safety, efficacy, effectiveness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness in medical practice. It can also help doctors fulfil their "high standards" by acting as a curative and preventive measure.

Comments: Any rigid position against Homoeopathy ignores the wealth of available scientific data. Unquestionably, Homoeopathy has scientific proof that it works and is not a placebo. It would be better if before one concludes that Homoeopathy is a placebo, s/he is given the opportunity to try it on themselves. A better way to influence the society would be to raise public awareness of the published research articles on Homoeopathy.

ANTI-ANGIOGENIC ACTIVITY OF HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICINES

Title: Repurposing the anti-angiogenic activity of homoeopathic medicines by employing chick embryo model – An *In Ovo* Study^[4]

Authors: Parth Aphale, Chinmay Gawade, Dharmendra Sharma, Ramesh Bhonde, Avinash Sanap

Journal: International Journal of High Dilution Research, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51910/ijhdr.v23icf.1317>

Summary: Haemorrhagic diseases are treated using homoeopathic remedies. The goal of this study was to determine the angiogenic/anti-angiogenic effects of the chosen homoeopathic medications using a chick embryo model and the yolk sack membrane assay. At 10% concentrations of *Hamamelis* 200cH, *Thlaspi bursa* 200cH and *Thlaspi bursa* 1M, significant anti-angiogenic effects were seen. There is evidence of the reduction in vessel density and total vascular network length, total branching points, total networks and total segment. These drugs may benefit menstrual disorder characterised by cramps and discharge of clots due to their anti-angiogenic potential. Significant anti-angiogenic activity has been demonstrated by medications such as *Thlaspi bursa* and *Hamamelis*, which is also visible in their *Materia Medica*. As an illustration, safrole, hexan-2-ol and eugenol, the active principle of *Hamamelis*, are employed. For instance, haemorrhages, varicose veins and venous congestion are treated with *Hamamelis*, which contains eugenol, hexan-2-ol

and safrole as its active principles. It affects the pathway of vein, relaxing it and resulting in engorgement.

Comments: Certain homoeopathic medications have been shown to function as anti-angiogenic agents, and they can be used to treat a variety of illnesses, including haemorrhages, varicose veins, venous congestion and haemorrhagic disorder-related issues. This may facilitate future research on the mechanism of action of homoeopathic medications as a possible therapeutic option for haemorrhagic illnesses, diabetic retinopathy and malignancies, where anti-angiogenesis is a key component.

EFFECTIVENESS OF HOMOEOPATHY IN EPIDEMICS

Title: Effectiveness, safety, accessibility, efficiency and appropriateness of homeopathy in an epidemic: Findings from a 5-month clinical audit^[5]

Authors: Parker Pracjek, Alastair C. Gray, Denise Straiges

Journal: Integrative Medicine Reports, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1089/imr.2024.0014>

Summary: For this investigation, 305 people with probable or positive COVID-19 symptoms were taken into consideration. Those interested in seeking help for symptoms and who were either positive or probable for COVID-19 visited the Homoeopathy Help Now website. Name, gender, birthdate, place of residence, pre-existing disease, current homoeopathic practitioner follow-up, availability of remedies, date symptom onset, type of sickness and use of conventional medication for acute illness were amongst the information gathered. A signed legal consent was acquired. Consultation with homoeopath over the phone or through video call was done. Presenting symptoms, COVID-19 status at treatment initiation, other practitioner methods and modalities followed, comorbidities, final contact outcome, individual remedy intervention outcome and remedy prescription information are all included in this data. These outcomes were contrasted with data from COVID-19 participants who did not get homoeopathic medicine. Positive intervention outcomes include degree of recovery after homoeopathic interventions (74.4%), individual remedy prescriptions (83.4% positive) and the overall results of interventions (76.2% positive).

Comments: This study demonstrates the efficacy of a single remedy used in homoeopathic treatment during pandemics, even in the absence of a doctor's visit. This further demonstrates how beneficial Homoeopathy can be to the subjects during isolation.

HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICINES VISUALISED THROUGH NANO TECHNOLOGY

Title: Characterisation of aqueous ultra-high homeopathic potencies: Nanoparticle tracking analysis^[6]

Authors: Michel Van Wassenhoven, Martine Goyens, Pierre Dorfman, Philippe Devos, Jean-Louis Demangeat

Journal: Homeopathy, DOI: 10.1055/s-0044-1787782

Summary: Homeopathy is sometimes criticised for having no discernible strength or material dose. In response to these remarks, an investigation was conducted to confirm that the homeopathic medications contained nanoparticles (NPs). The European Pharmacopoeia standards were followed in the preparation of six serial dilutions of regularly used homeopathic medicines, either soluble (*Gelsemium*, *Pyrogenium*, *Kalium mur*) or insoluble (*Cuprum*, *Argentum*, *Silicea*). Homeopathic dynamisations (DYNs) in pure water are contrasted with simple dilutions and up to 30cH/10⁻⁶⁰. This study confirmed that homeopathic dilutions prepared using the DYNs procedure display NPs using the nanoparticle tracking analysis (NTA). It confirms that homeopathic dilutions prepared through the dilution/DYNs procedure are unquestionably distinct from both simple dilutions and their diluted/dynamised solvent. Over 12,660 measurements were made to get this result. NTA measurements are used to identify the particles in aqueous homeopathic remedies, even at ultra-high dilutions. This further demonstrates that the process of homeopathic potentiation is not merely dilution. Over Avogadro's limit, homeopathic solutions are not pure water. In this study, diluted samples, controls, and potentized samples are compared. Additionally, soluble and insoluble raw materials are directly compared (after trituration).

Comments: In view of these results, Homeopathy may no longer be regarded as irrelevant. To support the claim, more research on the type, quantity and form of these NPs is needed. Other methods such as nuclear magnetic resonance, scanning electron microscopy, energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy, infrared measurements and electro-photonics analysis can be used to carry out additional research.

HOMOEOPATHY FOR MENSTRUAL IRREGULARITIES

Title: Treatment of Menstrual Irregularities with Individualised Homeopathic Medicinal Products in Early Reproductive Females: A Double-Blind, Randomised, Placebo-Controlled Trial^[7]

Authors: Usashi Nag, Rajat Kumar Pal, Subhranil Saha, Monsur Alam, Tahira Parvin, Raghbir Gole, Pintu Gole, Pintu Debnath, Shyamal Kumar

Journal: Journal of Integrative and Complementary Medicine, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1089/jicm.2024.0050>

Summary: Menstrual cycle irregularities are prevalent in 81.7–96.3% of women. Recent studies state that Homeopathy is amongst the most often choice treatments for women with a range of gynaecological conditions. A study was conducted to test the efficacy of individualised homeopathic medicines versus placebo with regard to monthly irregularities in early reproductive women. 92 subjects with menstrual irregularities were included in the trial. Outcome was assessed in terms of possibility of regularising monthly cycle for consecutive 3 cycles and Menstrual Distress Questionnaire total score. These two criteria are recorded at baseline and monthly.

Pulsatilla nigricans was prescribed the most often.

Comments: In future, alternative dependable and workable outcome evaluation criteria could be used to frame a double-blind randomised control study to demonstrate the efficacy of customised homeopathic medicine.

PROGNOSTIC FACTOR RESEARCH OF SIX HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES

Title: Estimation of the likelihood ratio of different symptoms for six homeopathic medicines: Prognostic Factor Research^[8]

Authors: Aditi Mohanta, Nipa Sardar, Koli Chakraborty, Malabika Sarkar, Tamoghna Saha, Anuruddha Deb, Md Sakhawat Hossain, Arpita Basu, Saima Samim, Soumya Bhattacharyya, Sangita Saha, Biswajit Basu, Anindya Sen, Mohan Giri, Pintu Debnath, Subhranil Saha, Munmun Koley, Shyamal Kumar Mukherjee, Lex Rutten

Journal: Homeopathy, DOI: 10.1055/s-0044-1787078

Summary: Likelihood ratio (LR) based on Bayesian statistics reflects the strength of symptoms than existing symptoms in homeopathic literature. The most frequently used medicines *Arsenicum album*, *Causticum*, *Nux vomica*, *Pulsatilla nigricans*, *Rhus toxicodendron* and *Sulphur* were considered for the study. 1954 patients were studied for a period of 21 months in an outpatient department. Using the Outcome Related to Impact on Daily Living (ORIDL) +4 to -4 scale, the results were noted at each follow-up. One hundred two different medicines were advised. For every one of six chosen medications, the LRs of four symptoms were computed. The results of the study showed that the following symptoms had exceptionally high LR+ scores: “dyspepsia from business anxiety” (*Nux vomica*, LR+ = 27.4); “intense sympathy for the suffering of others” (*Pulsatilla nigricans*, LR+ = 13.2); “desire for milk” (*Rhus toxicodendron*, LR+ = 7.5) and “very selfish, no regard for others” (*Sulphur*, LR+ = 20.6). The two species with the highest prevalence of ORIDL values of +2 or higher were Sulphur ($n = 119$) and *Pulsatilla nigricans* ($n = 138$).

Comments: Sufficient evidence was available to link all the evaluated symptoms to the six medicines under study. More research with larger population is necessary to re-confirm this result.

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Access this article online	
Quick Response Code:	Website: www.ijrh.org
Available in print version only	DOI: 10.53945/2320-7094.2208

How to cite this article: Valentina A. Research highlights. Indian J Res Homoeopathy 2024;18:222-225.

Received: 26 August 2024; **Accepted:** 07 September, 2024