

27-9-2024

## Doctors' day celebration and integration of Homoeopathy with mainstream healthcare

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### How to cite this article

Kaushik S. Doctors' day celebration and integration of Homoeopathy mainstream healthcare. Indian J Res Homoeopathy 2024;18:159-160.

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### Abstract

National Doctors' Day is observed in India on July 1st to commemorate the birth and death anniversary of Bharat Ratna Awardee, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, a distinguished physician, freedom fighter, and former Chief Minister of West Bengal, India . This year's theme for National Doctors' Day was, "Healing Hands, Caring Hearts," highlights the commitment, compassion, and empathy that doctors bring to their practice, underscoring their vital role in saving and enhancing lives. Practised for over a century in India, Homoeopathy has long been known for its role in enhancing the lives of people, in terms of gentle, holistic healing and long-lasting relief of long-term illnesses. It has, therefore, seamlessly integrated into the country's traditional and cultural fabric, apart from the health scenario of the nation. Currently, there are approximately 3,00,000 registered homoeopathic doctors in India, with around 12,000 new practitioners joining the field annually. To a country that is seen as a hub of Homoeopathy affairs and infrastructure, it is both humbling and gratifying for every Indian homoeopath to receive plentiful wishes on the occasion of National Doctors' Day from their patients. The all-inclusive approach of the nation on this day, where doctors of various medical streams are greeted and honoured by the people of India also throws light on how India endorses and celebrates its unique medical diversity

### Acknowledgments and Source of Funding

None

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National Doctors' Day is observed in India on 1<sup>st</sup> July to commemorate the birth and death anniversary of Bharat Ratna Awardee, Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy, a distinguished physician, freedom fighter and former Chief Minister of West Bengal, India.<sup>[1]</sup> He showcased his exceptional leadership, tact, and statesmanship in relations with British authorities.<sup>[2]</sup> This year's theme for National Doctors' Day, "Healing Hands, Caring Hearts," highlights the commitment to compassion and empathy that doctors bring to their practice, underscoring their key role in saving and enhancing lives. Practised for over a century in India, homoeopathy has long been known for its role in enhancing the lives of people, in terms of gentle, holistic healing and long-lasting relief of long-term illnesses. It has, therefore, seamlessly integrated into the country's traditional and cultural fabric, apart from the health scenario of the nation. At present, there are approximately 3,00,000 registered homoeopathic doctors in India, with around 12,000 new practitioners joining the field annually.<sup>[3]</sup> To a country that the world sees as a hub of homoeopathy affairs and infrastructure, it is both humbling and gratifying for every Indian homoeopath to receive plentiful wishes on the occasion of National Doctors' Day from their patients. The all-inclusive approach of the nation to this day, where doctors of all medical streams are greeted and honoured alike by the people of India, throws light on how India endorses and celebrates its unique medical diversity.

India has always been a strong advocate of integration of medicine. Integration offers patients a variety of treatment options, including economical and adaptable homoeopathic system, which, due to its safe and easy administration, can be a part of many healthcare strategies and policies. This integration ensures that patients can freely incorporate Homoeopathy within the framework of conventional or other types of medical care.

However, integrating homoeopathy into mainstream healthcare poses both opportunities and challenges. The government of India supports and promotes the access of homoeopathy services to its people in all parts of India. This popularises the medicine, as well as generates job opportunities for young homoeopathy doctors. This support also generates a wider scope of research in homoeopathy for its validation and enhanced credibility among the public. However, homoeopathy, founded on the principle of "let likes be cured by likes" utilizes highly diluted substances, and thus, differs principally from conventional medicine, thus springing doubts about its effectiveness and plausibility. Due to this, Homoeopathy doctors, at times, receive a cold shoulder

from their fellow colleagues in collocated centres. However, most homoeopaths would agree that this perception of our conventional friends changes with time for good. More often than not, once the clinical results start showing, the doctors from other modalities witness and realize the true potential of this therapeutic system.

Homoeopathy is increasingly complementing mainstream medicine, with people's inclination to personalised and holistic care gaining motion. By focusing on the individual's experiences and symptoms, homoeopathy aligns with the integrated medicine approach, which is tailored to address the whole person rather than just the disease. This approach is particularly effective in addressing the emotional and psychological well-being of the patients.<sup>[4]</sup> In fact, Homoeopathy is often used alongside conventional treatment for chronic conditions such as allergies, asthma and arthritis, as well as for common acute issues such as colic, ear infections and respiratory conditions. It provides additional symptom relief and complements standard treatments to enhance overall patient well-being.<sup>[5]</sup>

In addition, homoeopathy can help manage the side effects of conventional treatment, such as alleviating nausea and fatigue from chemotherapy.<sup>[6]</sup> It also supports recovery after surgery, with remedies like *Arnica montana* used to reduce bruising and swelling. In India, it is not uncommon to see homoeopaths collaborate with conventional medical professionals in certain health-care settings to create comprehensive treatment plans that incorporate both homoeopathic and conventional methods, provided these approaches are aligned and evidence based. That said, more sensitisation initiatives to orient our integrative minded fellow practitioners to consider recommending the use of Homoeopathy alongside conventional care are required.

Homoeopathy enriches integrated medicine by offering supportive care and approaches that work in tandem with conventional treatment. Its role continues to evolve with ongoing research and advancements in integrative care practices. For every step this world takes towards the integration of medicine, the possibility of a fitter population globally becomes more real and within reach.

The integration of homoeopathy in modern medicine, thus, highlights its potential in treating diverse conditions, as evidenced by several studies. In this issue, an article on homoeopathy in bipolar affective disorder provides an overview of its therapeutic benefits, suggesting a holistic approach to mental healthcare.<sup>[7]</sup> Similarly, individualised homoeopathic treatment for childhood autism accentuates the importance of personalised medicine in improving social interactions,

emphasising tailored interventions.<sup>[8]</sup> In the context of women's health, the case series on polycystic ovarian syndrome illustrates how homoeopathic management can address hormonal imbalances and related symptoms, bridging traditional practices with contemporary health challenges.<sup>[9]</sup> In addition, evidence-based cases on ichthyosis vulgaris and pragmatic studies on vitiligo treatment further demonstrate the usefulness of homoeopathy in dermatological conditions, advocating for its inclusion in integrative treatment protocols.<sup>[10,11]</sup> Finally, the stability study of *Arsenicum album* underscores the need for rigorous scientific evaluation to ensure the quality and reliability of homoeopathic medicines.<sup>[12]</sup> Together, these articles illustrate the growing recognition of homoeopathy as a valuable component of healthcare, potentially enhancing patient outcomes across various health domains.

It's my pleasure to end this piece by wishing all my medical colleagues a very Happy Doctors' Day. May we continue to gently, and permanently restore health.

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**Received:** 17 September 2024; **Accepted:** 18 September 2024

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<b>Quick Response Code:</b>	<b>Website:</b> www.ijrh.org
Available in print version only	<b>DOI:</b> 10.53945/2320-7094.2223

**How to cite this article:** Kaushik S. Doctors' day celebration and integration of Homoeopathy mainstream healthcare. *Indian J Res Homoeopathy* 2024;18:159-160.