

HOMEOPATHY A COMPLIMENT TO DENTISTRY – A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Homeopathy which is a rapidly growing system and from more than a century and a half being practiced in India. Its strength lies in its evident effectiveness as it takes a holistic approach towards the sick individual through promotion of inner balance at mental, emotional, spiritual and physical levels. Briefly, homeopathy is a system of healing that seeks to cure illness in accordance with certain principles of healing, utilizing remedies made from plants, minerals, or animal products. These remedies are prepared by a process of repeated dilution and shaking, which renders them capable of stimulating the healing process. The treatment is not directed at removing symptoms or killing germs but, rather, toward strengthening the person so that his or her own healing capacities function better. There are many homeopathic remedies that have been found effective also in treating various dental conditions and therefore, the purpose of this paper is to enlighten the facts that homeopathy provides an complimentary alternative medicinal dental approach to dental diseases.

KEYWORDS: Complimentary alternative medicine; Homeopathy; Dentistry

INTRODUCTION

Homeopathy, also known as homeopathic medicine, is a rapidly growing system and is being practiced almost all over the world. It is more than a century and a half now that Homeopathy is being practiced in India. It has blended so well into the roots and tradition of the country that it has been recognized as one of the National Systems of Medicine and plays an important role in providing health care to large number of people. It has become a household name in India due to the safety of its pills and gentleness of its cure. It's a method of treating an ailment caused by injurious toxic substances with the same or similar substances given in an extremely diluted form. It is absolutely essential that poison of the like there to be diluted to an extent that it causes no harm to the body. Its

strength lies in its evident effectiveness as it takes a holistic approach towards the sick individual through promotion of inner balance at mental, emotional, spiritual and physical levels.^[1-3] The word 'Homeopathy' is derived from two Greek words, Homois meaning similar and pathos meaning suffering. Homeopathy simply means treating diseases with remedies, prescribed in minute doses, which are capable of producing symptoms similar to the disease when taken by healthy people. It is based on the natural law of healing - "**Similia Similibus Curentur**" which means "likes are cured by like".^[4,5] Dr. Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843 AD) a German chemist and surgeon was born in Meissen, Germany. Hahnemann received his 'Medical degree from Erlangen University in 1779 but soon became disillusioned by medical practices of the time,

which he considered unscientific and barbaric. He gave a scientific basis in the early 19th century. He has been serving suffering humanity for over two centuries and has withstood the upheavals of time and has emerged as a time-tested therapy. The scientific principles propounded by Hahnemann are natural and well proven and continue to be followed with success. Due to his enormous work in the field of Homeopathy, he was designated as “Father of Homeopathy”.^[6,7] He turned to translating medical textbooks as a means of supporting himself and his family. It was while translating a text by a Scottish physician by the name of Cullen that he found himself disagreeing with the author's explanation of the mode of action of Peruvian bark (Cinchona, or 'China') in the treatment of malaria. In order to test his hypothesis Hahnemann took significant doses of Cinchona himself for a number of days, and found that he suffered symptoms identical to those of malaria, though without the fever. This experiment he conducted in 1790, and after a great deal of work, Hahnemann published his principles in 1796 as the Law of Similars, encapsulated by the phrase 'Similia Similibus Curentur' - 'Let like be cured by like'. A full description of the system of medicine he had developed was published in 1810 as 'The Organon of the Medical Art'.^[6,7] In order to accumulate necessary information to practice, Hahnemann tested effects of a large number of substances on healthy individuals. The collections of symptoms produced by testing of medicines on healthy subjects are termed 'Proving' from the German 'Prüfung' meaning 'test'. Perhaps not surprisingly, Hahnemann found that use of toxic medicines in sick frequently caused worsening of patient's condition before therapeutic effect appeared, and in an effort to reduce these effects he experimented with progressive dilutions of the medicines. By meticulous experimentation, he discovered that dilution method involved vigorous shaking of each vial & medicines not only became safer to use but also more powerful. This process he termed 'Dynamisation', now generally translated as 'Potentisation'.^[6-8]

HISTORY^[1,2,9]

Principle of Homeopathy has been known since the time of Hippocrates from Greece, around 450 BC. More than a thousand years later, Swiss alchemist Paracelsus employed same system of

healing based upon principle of “like cures like”. Then in 1796, a great German physician, Dr. Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843 AD) believed that human beings have a capacity for healing themselves and those symptoms of disease reflect the individuals struggle to overcome his illness.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION IN INDIA^[2,4,10]

Homeopathy entered India in 1839 when Dr. John Martin Honigberger was called to treat Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the ruler of Punjab, for paralysis of vocal cords and edema. This royal patronage helped system to have its roots in India. Seeing this deplorable state of affairs, efforts were made by the Government and in 1948, a Homeopathic Enquiry Committee was set up to evolve a suitable arrangement to regulate teaching and practice of Homeopathy. A Homeopathic advisor Committee was appointed in 1952 by the Govt. of India and the recommendations of this committee led to passing of a Central Act in 1973 for recognition of this system. Homeopathy now has been accepted as one of the National Systems of Medicine in India.

CONCEPT AND PRINCIPLES^[11-15]

The questions are often related to therapy, diagnosis, prognosis or causation. Most often the original question is too broad, so narrowing it down involves using a PICO format.^[1]

THE BASICS OF A WELL BUILT QUESTION

Homeopathy is the system of treatment based on demonstrable laws and principles, which are:

- a) **The Law of Similars:** It is also called the Law of Cure. This law demonstrates that the selected remedy is able to produce a range of symptoms in a healthy person similar to that observed in the patient, thus leading to the principle of “Similia Similibus Curentur” i.e. let likes be treated by likes.
- b) **The Law of Single Remedy:** This law directs to choose and administer such a single remedy, which is most similar to the symptom complex of the sick person at a time.
- c) **The Law of Minimum Dose:** The similar remedy selected for a sick should be prescribed in minimum dose, so that when administered there is no toxic effects on the body. It does not need to be repeated frequently.

HOLISTIC AS WELL AS INDIVIDUALISTIC APPROACH IN MEDICINE THROUGH HOMEOPATHY^[11,12,14]

Even though it may sound strange, Homeopathy does not treat disease *per se*. A Homeopath does not concentrate his therapy on, say arthritis or cancer. In other words he does not limit his treatment to painful joints, inflamed bronchi or a malignant growth. Rather, he treats all aspects like mental, emotional and physical status of the person who happens to be suffering with arthritis, bronchitis or cancer. Homeopathy regards each patient as a unique individual, e.g. six persons with hepatitis might get a different Homeopathic remedy, each one aimed at the individual's totality of symptoms rather than at his liver alone. The physician's interest is not only to alleviate the patient's symptoms but also his long-term well-being.

Concept of Vital Force:

Dr. Hahnemann discovered that human body is endowed with a force that reacts against inimical forces, which produces disease. It becomes deranged during illness and best-selected Homeopathic remedies simulate this failing vital force so that, as Hahnemann said "it can again take the reins and conduct the system on way to health".

Concept of Miasm:

Psora, Syphilis and Psychosis are three fundamental causes of all chronic disease that afflict the human race as discovered by Dr. Hahnemann and called them "Miasms". Syphilis and Psychosis are venereal and contagious chronic diseases, whereas Psora is a non-venereal chronic disease. Psora is present from the beginning to end of life and is a root cause of most of the diseases.

Principle of Drug Proving:

To apply drugs for therapeutic use, their curative powers should be known. It is the method employed to know these powers and is unique as they are proved on healthy human beings. The symptoms thus known are true record of curative properties of a drug or pathogenesis of a drug.

Drug Dynamisation or Potentisation:

Drugs are prepared in such a way that they retain maximum medicinal powers without producing any toxic action and were found experimentally

by Dr. Hahnemann that diluted drugs develop lasting medicinal powers.

METHODS OF PREPARING HOMOEOPATHIC REMEDIES^[1,6,7]

Homoeopathic remedies are prepared in two ways:-

1. The original substance or extract is mixed in alcohol, stored for a while and then sifted. This is called the Mother Tincture. The letter Q tells us that the homoeopathic remedy is a Mother Tincture.
2. Then Mother Tincture is diluted with alcohol or distilled water, shaken vigorously two to four times so that it becomes completely homogeneous. Did the cause precede the Effect?

GENERAL GUIDELINES To INCREASE The EFFECTIVENESS OF HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES^[8,16,17]

1. Homeopathic remedies should not be touched. They must be taken directly from the container into the month.
2. They should be placed under the tongue and allowed to dissolve.
3. No food should be taken twenty minutes before the remedies are taken.
4. Avoid taking coffee, tea or mint during use of homeopathic remedies. These substances have the potential of neutralizing the effect of the remedies.
5. Do not store the homeopathic remedies in areas that contain such products as ether, camphor, perfumes or other highly volatile substances. These products will neutralize the homeopathic remedies.
6. When the symptoms start to abate or resolve, discontinue the homeopathic remedy.
7. It is advisable to take medicine in empty stomach. However, in emergency conditions it can be used at any time.

DIET OF THE PATIENT^[6]

There is no restriction regarding the diet. Yet, the patient must refrain from consuming foods that aggravate his symptoms or do not suit him.

PRESERVATION OF HOMOEOPATHIC REMEDIES^[4,6,13,18]

In general, homoeopathic remedies last for long time. In general, they should be kept in a dry temperate place with covers of bottles are tightly closed. If bottle has completely dried out, the remedy should be made afresh. Exposure to direct

sunlight makes homeopathic remedies ineffective. Empty bottles should be thoroughly cleansed, boiled in water and dried in sun in order to destroy any residual effects. As a rule, all homeopathic remedies must be kept in separate. It is better that mixture be prepared fresh, when required. Homeopathic remedies must be kept away from strong perfumes, especially Camphor as it destroys the effectiveness. One should also refrain from opening the bottle in a room sprayed with strong antiseptic or perfume.

METHODS OF PREPARING

Use is more limited in dentistry than in medicine. Homeopathy cannot replace the mechanical parts of dentistry and there is no homeopathic medicine that will selectively numb a tooth. There are many ways in which homeopathy can be integrated into the practice of dentistry either to replace conventional drugs or to act on instances for which there are no conventional alternative. Also there are some common Homeopathic Therapeutic Agents for oral health [Table 1].^[6,7,11,13,18]

DENTAL CONDITIONS AND REMEDIES^[8,13,14,16,18]

There are many homeopathic remedies that have been found effective in treating various dental conditions. Below is a partial list of such remedies and conditions for which they can be recommended.

Abscess:

- Belladonna: Best used for early dental abscess accompanied by redness and throbbing pain.
- Bryonia: Used for acute inflammation or if pricking pain is relieved by firm pressure.
- Hepar-sulphuris: Used for abscess accompanied by pus formation.
- Myristica: Used when swelling is accompanied by numbness of the area.
- Pulsatilla: Used when the pain is accentuated by heat and relieved by cold water.
- Pyrogenium: Used when pus is present without drainage.
- Silica: Used to hasten the discharge when pus is draining.

Acute Dental Problem:

- Arnica: Used in inflammation and trauma from routine dental procedures. Included in this category is post-operative swelling from injections, extraction of teeth, gum surgery,

preparation of teeth, soreness following insertion of new full or partial dentures.

- Hypericum: Used for nerve pain, post-operative surgery (tooth extraction or gum work), toothache, sore dentures, and accidental facial trauma.
- Myristicasebifera: Used for Prevention of abscesses. To be taken 15 minutes prior to any invasive dental or surgical procedure.
- Belladonna: Used for sudden onset of a gum or tooth abscess that is accompanied by redness, inflammation and throbbing pain which is aggravated by the slightest touch.
- Ferrum Phosphoricum: Used for post-surgical bleeding following an extraction or gum surgery that is not controlled by pressure with a moist gauze pad.
- Hepar-Sulphuriscalcareum: Ideally suited for a beginning dental abscess when accompanied by pus formation, increased salivation and when the gums are tender to touch and bleeds easily.
- Silica: Used to enhance the drainage of pus.
- Myristica: Indicated when the abscess is swollen and accompanied with numbness of the area as is often in the cases with wisdom teeth problems.
- Ledum: Excellent remedy for the post-trauma effects of dental injections.
- Staphysagria: Indicated for incisions of soft tissues such as periodontal flap procedures, impacted third molars where access flaps must be performed or periodontal graft procedures.
- Apismemifera: Used for sudden and rapid onset of swelling accompanied by pink oedema, pricking and burning pains.

Bruxism:

- Belladonna: Used for grinding problem that causes painful teeth.
- Podophyllum: Used for night grinding when experiencing a burning sensation of the tongue.
- Tuberculinum: Used for children who grind their teeth.

Fear of Going to the Dentist:

- Aconite: When an individual experiences fear with a sudden onset of panic (about an upcoming dental visit) accompanied by physical and emotional restlessness.

Agent	Indications
Ammonium phosphoricum	Facial paralysis.
Antimoniumtartaricum	Mouth sores caused by Candida albicans.
Apismellifica	Swollen gums; red, sore tongue and throat; cancer of the tongue.
Arnica montana	Easily Bleeding gums; dry, ulcerated tissue; dry, red tongue; toothache that is worse at night; metallic taste; sore muscles; pain, sprains.
Bismuthumoxidatum	Toothache that feels better with cold water, swollen gums.
Borax	Canker sores, bitter taste in mouth, dry mouth.
Calcareacarbonica	Cracking noise and throbbing in ears, pulsating pain in teeth, swollen sub maxillary glands, bleeding gums, toothache from hot or cold food or drinks, bad breath.
Calcarefluorica	Loose teeth with toothache when chewing, oral tumors, teething pain.
Calendula	Cuts and other wounds caused by tooth extraction.
Capsicum	Oral herpes, bad breath.
Causticum	Facial paralysis, pain in facial bones, pain in jaws with difficulty in opening mouth.
Chamomilla	Toothache that intensifies with hot or warm foods or drinks, teething pain.
Dulcamara	Cold sores, especially on lips; symptoms of neuralgia.
Echinacea rudbeckia	Canker sores, recede gums that bleed easily, cracks at corners of lips, dry or swollen tongue.
Heparsulphuris	Painful, bleeding gums; depression; anxiety; swelling; infection; pain in jaw upon opening.
Hypericum	Injuries to nerves as in deep cavities; for pain control after any major dental treatment.
Kali phosphoricum	Bad breath; excessive dry mouth in the morning; toothache; spongy, bleeding, and receding gums; anxiety.
Kreosotum	Swollen, spongy, bleeding gums; cold sores; dry, cracked lips; pain in facial bones; lack of energy.
Mercuriussolubilis	Bad breath, excessive salivation, oral herpes (recommended during and after removal of many mercury fillings).
Phytolacca	Teething pain, pain in the soft palate, swollen tonsils.
Pulsatilla	Toothache, bad breath, alteration or loss of taste, salivary gland disorder
Rhamnuscalifornica	Muscular pain and swollen joints in jaw (TMJ), canker sore between gums and lips.
Staphysagria	Toothache during menstruation, anger, moods swings.
Upastiente	Herpes of lips.

- Gelsemiumsempervirens: Fear dental fears that are accompanied by nausea, diarrhoea, sleepy feeling or “weak Knees”

Gingivitis, Periodontitis and Alveolitis:

- Arsenicum album: Used for unhealthy, bleeding gums.
- Ferrumphosphoricum: Used for poor gum tone or gums that bleed after brushing.
- Hypericum: Used for tender gum tissue and to promote healing.
- Kali chloricum: Used for acute ulcerative tissue.
- Natrummuriaticum: Used for maintenance of the Tissue integrity.
- Heparsulphuris: Used for tissue with suppuration, chronic abscesses.
- Silicea: Used for Periodontal abscess with swollen glands.
- Staphysagria: Used for Loose teeth, pain increased by pressure.

- Symphytum: Injuries to periosteum, stimulates growth of epithelium on ulcerated surfaces.

- Mercuriussolubilis: Used for acute ulcerative tissue with a coated tongue and metallic taste in the mouth.

- Nux vomica: Used for swollen painful gums when the back of the tongue has a whitish coating and when the patient consumes a lot of stimulants such as coffee and tea.

- Phosphorous: Used for swollen gums that bleed easily and in cases of hyper-salivation.

- Araneadiadema: Used for injured bone and alveolitis

Hemorrhage:

- Arnica: Used for bleeding accompanied by bruised soreness

- Ferrumphosphoricum: Used when there is bright red bleeding.

Neuralgia:

- Aconite: Used for Trigeminal neuralgia.

- Araneadiadema: Used for radiating pain in the right side of the face that is aggravated by cold. Also use for sudden, severe pain in the teeth at night after lying down.
- Cuprum metallicum: Used for cramping of muscles.
- Gelsemiumsempervirens: Used to relieve headache and pain of the upper back and neck, which extends over the head and for dizziness and numbness.
- Maria Ignacia: Used in cases of headache.
- Magnesia phosphorous: Used for spasmodic pains made worsens by cold water and made better by heat and rubbing.
- Sanguinaria canadensis: Used for Right sided neuralgia- facial migraine.
- Spigeliaanthelmia: Used for pain involving the eye, cheek, and left temple areas.
- Zincumphosphoricum: Used for Sharp pains on the right side of head.
- Zincum valerian: Used for Sharp pains on the left side of head.

Oral Herpes Lesions:

- Graphites, Petroleum Jelly, Rhus Toxicodendron and Arsenicum album: Used to resolve this painful lesion.

Postoperative Discomfort:

- Apismellifica: Good for post injection soreness after dental procedure.
- Chamomilla: Given one hour prior to dental appointment for patients with a low pain threshold.
- Ledumpalustre: Used for puncture wounds and soreness resulting from a dental injection.
- Magnesia phosphorica: Used for stiff, sore jaws following prolonged dental work when the muscles are cramped and feel better with warmth.
- Staphysagria: Used for incision-type wounds after soft tissue surgery.
- Symphytum: Used for trauma of bone and periosteum.

Salivation:

- Barytacobonica: Used in hyper-salivation during sleep.
- Bryoniaalba: Used for an extremely dry mouth, with dryness of mucous membranes.
- Phosphorous: Used for hyper salivation; when gums are swollen and bleeds easily.

- Pulsatilla: Use for hypo-salivation with diminished thirst.

Severe Trismus (muscle spasms):

- HypericumPerforatum: Excellent for the prevention of muscle spasms.
- Calcarea carbonica: Used for a delayed eruption.
- Chamomilla: Used for delayed and difficult tooth eruption.
- Hypericum: Used for nerve pain associated with tooth eruption.
- Zincum metallicum: Used for teeth gritting during difficult dentition with loose teeth and bleeding gums.

Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ):

- Arum triphyllum: Used for pain in joint on swallowing.
- Calcareafluorica: Used for hyper-mobile joints.
- Calcarea phosphorica: Used when mouth cannot be opened without pain.
- Carbovegetabilis: Used for vertigo with nausea and tinnitus.
- Chamomilla: Used for low pain threshold. Unbearable spasms of pain, radiating into the ear.
- Cuprum metallicum: Used for trismus of muscles.
- Granatum: Used for painful cracking of the joint.
- Magnesium phosphorica: Used for muscle spasms.
- Phytolaccadecandra: Used for ear-aches with pain extending into teeth, jaw and throat.
- Rhustoxicodendron: Used for joint stiffness that improves with movement and for "Popping" of TMJ.

Toothache:

- Aconitum napellus: Indicated for unbearable pain accompanied by anxiety, restlessness that comes on suddenly and where movement worsens the condition. The pain is sharp and tearing in nature. Represented a severe pulpitis or inflammation of the nerve of the tooth.
- Antimonium crudum: Used for a toothache that is worse at night and is aggravated by heat.

- Araneadiadema: Used for sudden, severe pain in the teeth after lying down.
- Belladonna: Used for throbbing tooth worsens when pressure is applied.
- Calcareacarbonica: Used for a toothache that worsens when exposed to hot or cold air.
- Coffeacruca: Use for toothache that worsens with heat and is relieved by ice.
- Ferrummetallicum: Use for a toothache that is relieved by ice water.
- Magnesia carbonica: Use for a toothache that is worsens in night hours.
- Magnesia phosphorica: Works well with toothaches that are worsens with cold and relief by heat.
- Plantago major: Used for a toothache that is better with pressure and worse without cold air.
- Pulsatilla: Used for a toothache that is relieved by holding cold water in the mouth.
- Staphysagria: Used for pain from major decay of a number of teeth.

Ulcerations:

- Natrummuriaticum: Used for cold sores and fever blisters. Lips and corners of mouth dry and cracked lips.
- Nitircumacidum: Used for ulcer with irregular edges and a raw appearance with a tendency to bleed easily.

CONCLUSION

Homeopathy discovers the essence of disease through the symptom syndrome, or the totality of the mental, emotional, and physical symptoms expressed by the patient. By means of the totality of symptoms, the homeopathic practitioner treats the patient as a whole rather than treating the disease in its localized expression. Therefore, the cause rather than the effect is being treated. While the science of how it works is yet to be completely defined, the results of its application are undeniable. Furthermore, homeopathic remedies are safe and there is no risk of interactions with other drugs or dietary supplements. Finally, unlike dietary supplements health claims can be made for homeopathic remedies.

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