

REVIEW ON ROLE OF HOMEOPATHIC MEDICINE IN DENTISTRY

**Dr. Amit Reche¹, Anjali Nandanwar², Aniket Hedao³, Dr. Kumar Garuav Chhabra⁴,
Dr. Gargi Nimbulkar⁵, Dr. Swapnil Mohod⁶**

1. Dr. Amit Reche, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Health Dentistry, Sharad Pawar Dental College and Hospital, Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences (Deemed to be University), Sawangi, (Meghe)Wardha, 442001, Maharashtra, India

2. Anjali Nandanwar, Assistant Resident, Sharad Pawar Dental College and Hospital, Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences (Deemed to be University), Sawangi, (Meghe)Wardha, 442001, Maharashtra, India

3. Aniket Hedao, Assistant Resident, Sharad Pawar Dental College and Hospital, Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences (Deemed to be University), Sawangi, (Meghe)Wardha, 442001, Maharashtra, India

*4) Kumar Garuav Chhabra, Associate Professor & Head, Department of Public Health Dentistry
Sharad Pawar Dental College and Hospital, Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences (Deemed to be University), Sawangi, (Meghe)Wardha, 442001, Maharashtra, India*

5) Dr. Gargi Nimbulkar, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Health Dentistry, Sharad Pawar Dental College and Hospital, Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences (Deemed to be University), Sawangi, (Meghe)Wardha, 442001, Maharashtra, India

6) Dr. Swapnil Mohod, Assistant Professor, , Department of Public Health Dentistry, Sharad Pawar Dental College and Hospital, Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences (Deemed to be University), Sawangi, (Meghe)Wardha, 442001, Maharashtra, India

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Amit Reche, Assistant Professor, Department of Public Health Dentistry, Sharad Pawar Dental College and Hospital, Datta Meghe Institute of Medical Sciences (Deemed to be University), Sawangi, (Meghe)Wardha, 442001, Maharashtra, India.

Email: dramitreche@gmail.com; Mobile no. 9096469080

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Abstract

Nowadays dentists are facing difficulties in managing toothache or other chronic or recurrent dental conditions due to recurrence of symptoms or side effects of conventional treatment. One point that most of us fail to realize is that associated with the dental disorder are the various systems of body that work continuously for maintaining the dental health of the individual. For this, numerous alternative medical therapies are practiced in

dentistry apart from allopathy, which comprise homeopathy, regulation thermography, nosode therapy, acupuncture, magnetic field therapy and ozone therapy.

Homeopathy is a system of alternative medicine, which has been in widespread use in adults as well as children. It is known for its low price, effectiveness and safety results compared to allopathy . In dentistry, as an adjunct to standard treatment, usage of homeopathy to treat dental problems has been reported since 18th century. World Health Organization has recognized homeopathy as one of the largest practiced medicine in current times. It is a promising field of dental medicine which would emerge to be useful in management of diseases and disorders affecting orofacial structures. Homeopathic remedies are used in dental profession for better psychological condition of patient. The purpose of the present review is to introduce the basics of homeopathy and to discuss it's possible applications in dental practice.

Keywords: *Dentistry, Homeopathic Remedies, Alternative therapy.*

Introduction-

Dentistry has progressed tremendously since the ancient times when the teeth were used to be made from gold, silver, wood, ivory and lead ^[1] to the recent times of ceramics and zirconia and even continues to do so . One of the emerging field of the dental medicine is Homeopathy .The term “Homeopathy” is derived from the Greek word ‘Homoios’ which means similar, and ‘Pathos’ which means suffering and illness. ^[2] The basic law governing Homeopathy is the ‘Law of similar’. This law states that a substance can treat an illness if it gives rise to symptoms in a person with good health much lesser than those of the sick one. Samuel Christian Friedrich Hahnemann was the German physician who composed the idea of homeopathy within the 1800s. The incorporation of homeopathic medicine in dentistry is helpful for simple and straightforward mild pain due to a decayed tooth to difficult and long standing conditions that have shown to be tough to cure, for example, fear of dentist, atypical facial pain, burning mouth syndrome and post extraction osteitis. ^[3] Homeopathy is used as an valuable complement to dental therapy to help relieve toothache, inflammation and haemorrhage. Homeopathy does not completely replace the conventional mechanics of dentistry but it makes the entire procedure more comfortable and peaceful for the patient as well as the dentist. Apart from curing acute dental conditions, homeopathic medicines have the ability to cure diverse long term dental problems as well . Seeing that some of the long standing dental problems arise from the overall condition of health of a patient, homeopathic medicines which have the capability to reinforce a person’s general health and well being thus can supplement general dental hygiene for the prevention and treatment of oral diseases.

Principle of homeopathy -

The main principles on which homeopathy treatment is based are as follows:

1. The law of similar: (Similia similibus curantur) This principle states that like shall be cured by like, which means that the correct cure for a patient’s illness is that substance which produces manifestations in a healthy person, almost like that which is seen in the diseased patient. ^[4]

2. The law of Single Remedy: The advised medication must be straightforward and single substance and not an amalgamation of various substances, the collective effect of which might be very different from that of individual substances being used.^[4]

3. The law of Minimum Dose: A substance when given in minute dose will cure the disease in sick person but when given in large dose to a healthy person it will produce symptoms of that disease.^[5]

4. Concept of Vital Force: Homeopathic doctors believe in the existence of the vital force in the body which is responsible for different manifestations of life, and the derangement of this vital force leads to abnormal sensations and body function which constitute the disease.^[1]

Origin of dental diseases-

Homeopathic medicine offers dentistry which one might not have wondered. Dental problems initially appear simple, easy and uncomplicated which only requires proper tooth brushing and oral hygiene maintenance for prevention. However, the treatment of dental disease doesn't depend only on use of preventive practices and maintenance of excellent oral hygiene but taking into consideration the general body and various systems functioning in it.^[6] Hence, considering addition of homeopathic medications could be greatly beneficial for the final outcome of the dental treatment.

a) Tooth decay and associated diseases of gums are thought to have arisen principally because of the substandard care and below par maintenance of the teeth and associated structures of the mouth. Additional components that have an impact on occurrence of dental caries is salivary glands within the mouth which helps in fighting decay by neutralizing the acid produced by germs.^[1]

b) The person's general health reflects in the health of his gums. Hormones, especially, play a part within the health of gums. The derangement of thyroid gland function could lead to secretion of abnormal thyroid hormones which results in damage to the periodontal ligament that confine the teeth and the soft tissue supporting structures together. The perfusion to gums is also reduced.^[1]

c) Disproportion in the values of estrogen and progesterone can make a person prone to dental problems, that is why females encounter aggravated dental conditions during stages of life which involve unbalanced state of hormones like puberty, menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause.^[1]

d) Decreased value of oxygen carried in the blood caused by anemia can reduce the volume of blood oxygen reaching the gums which makes a person more prone to gum diseases.^[1]

e) The firmness of the connective tissues between teeth and gums can also be affected by something as common as stress.^[1]

f) The parathyroid glands regulate the amount of calcium in the body, and any disparity in these glands can be a cause of many dental disorders.^[1]

The correct homeopathic medicine results in the treatment of deranged functions of body and plays an integral role in restoring dental health along with the routine dental treatment carried out for different dental problems.

Homeopathic Medicines for Dental Problems -

Firstly, it should be made clear that homeopathic remedies are not a replacement for dental treatments but an adjunct to it. They are useful in getting rid of toothache, but it is frequently necessary to locate the origin of pain to relieve it permanently. For instance, in case of throbbing pain caused by an abscess, the abscess must be treated without just blindly treating the pain caused by it.

The homeopaths report efficiently managing patient's fright, worry and expectation of visit to a dental office. Regardless if these feelings be logical or not, they have medications which seem to be most efficacious for it. Aconite (monkshood) is a routine medication given usually for children, for their fear of going to dentists.^[1] Often children become enraged, uneasy and irritated (they tend to kick and stamp their feet), and have a tendency to precise supreme responsiveness to the touch of a dentist or his instrument. Gelsemium (potency 12C) work wonderfully in reducing the fear of anxious patient who reported for dental treatment.^[1] These does wonder especially for children, a dose taken morning of the procedure, is sufficient to reduce the anxiety level of patient and we know that a relaxed patient contributes to easy, gentle work for the dentist.

To decide the proper homeopathic medication for dental pain, it is first important to locate the origin of the pain. If dental abscess occurs then Belladonna, Mercurius, Hepar sulph and Silicea are given. Belladonna (potency 6C) is used in the early formation period of pus in which there is redness and increased temperature but the swelling is not appreciated.^[1] Merc sol (potency 6C) is useful in hypersalivation and associated oral malodour,^[5] and having a throbbing pain which favour to be worse in the dark or from subject to anything exceptionally cold or hot. Hepar sulph is effective in cases of chronic abscess where the pus formation has started or the pus is discharging.^[4] After the pus has discharged Silicea is indicated.^[1]

Even though these medications are useful in relieving the pain and in some cases in curing it, it is frequently imperative for the abscess to undergo drainage and a root canal treatment.

In cases of inflammation and trauma from routine dental procedures, Arnica (Potency 30C) works^[4]. Even a simplest and most basic treatment by the dentist might produce slightest amount of disturbances to the tissues of the oral cavity leaving it sore. This application could be given to reduce postoperative swelling from any oral surgical procedure, and soreness following insertion of new complete or partial dentures.

Silica (Potency 6C) works well by causing any root fragments or splinters of bone to exfoliate following any oral surgery^[1] and is routinely given to patients after extraction. In case of post surgical nerve pain Hypericum (Potency 9C) works wonderfully.^[4]

Ledum (Potency 30C) is an excellent for reducing post trauma effects of dental injections especially for palatal injections and inferior alveolar nerve blocks and it was given routinely to patients who were given injections.^[1] An excellent antidote when local anesthetics are used for any dental treatment is Chamomilla (Potency 12C).^[1] To reduce numbness, this medicine can be taken every fifteen minutes after the procedure is completed. This can also minimizes the lip bite seen in children after inferior alveolar nerve block which is caused due to numbness for long duration.

To begin with, Arnica (Potency 200C) every quarter hourly for Post-surgical hemorrhage that was not controlled by pressure with moist gauze is given, but when it's bright red colour then

ferrum phos (Potency 6C) every 15 minutes, and when it is dark coloured then Lachesis (Potency 30C) every hourly is given. ^[1]Both work wonderfully by their haemostatic actions as well as patient's compliance to this homeopathic application.

A common complication of extraction is dry socket. Mouthwash of salvia infusions is given several times a day to diminish pain of dry socket and a two to three drops of Hypercal (Hypericum and Calendula tincture) is given, in a glass of slightly warm water to reduce desiccation and make the oral cavity much more pleasant. ^[1] With pulsating pain, belladonna (potency 30C) and with intolerable pain coffea (potency 30C) is given. ^[6]

Ruta is valuable in patients undergoing orthodontic treatment. ^[1]It was given after any adjustment of braces or during fixed and removable orthodontic treatment while Chamomilla (Potency 15C) is best suited for difficult and delayed tooth eruptions in children^[4] and in those patients who reported nerve pain in association with tooth eruption then Hypericum (Potency 9C) is prescribed.

The patients who are anxious about amalgam fillings or whenever an amalgam filling is to be removed, Merc sol (Potency 30C) is given to patients to minimize the ill effects of mercury in body^[7,8]. It is an amazing solution for to get rid of the mercury from the body.

Often tooth preparation leads to sensitivity, Hypericum because of its nerve injury healing property are routinely given to patients who reported for tooth cavity filling since any cutting of the tooth structure can include tiny nerve endings in the dentinal tubules present in tooth. ^[1] *Plantago tincture* is a medicament that has been found most advantageous when massaged onto or around a tooth or teeth that are sensitive to hot or cold, or put into cavity. ^[1] Sensitivity can also be caused by Abrasion. Hypericum and calendula tinctures (hypercal) should be applied to the abraded part of tooth three times daily till the symptoms subside. ^[9,10]

Contemporary dental treatments can achieve more in less amount of time, and today it is common for a dentist to do the procedures in one sitting what earlier used to be done in multiple sittings. The long appointments have become a part of today's current treatment trends towards "cosmetic" dentistry: "Hollywood" smiles, ceramic crowns, inlays, veneers and tooth bleaching. These procedures have a positive impact not only on the identity of the person but also his psyche. Nevertheless having to keep the jaws extended and open for long time intervals causes difficulty for some patients. In such cases, Magnesium phosphorus or Causticum is advised to relieve stiffness and pain of the jaw or lack of ability to open the mouth. ^[1] Arnica can be given if there is tenderness or bruising. Two to three drops of Hypercal (Hypericum and Calendula tincture) in a glass of slightly warm water can be given to reduce desiccation and make the oral cavity much more pleasant and soothing, particularly after a surgery. ^[1]

Arum triphyllum is given to patients who complaint of pain in temporomandibular joint on swallowing, while in hypermobile joints *Calcarea flourica* is useful ^[1]

Arsenicum album and Ferrum phosphoricum are given to the patient who reported with severe gingivitis. ^[1] On the other hand, for intensely covered tongue, Merc sol (potency 30C) thrice a day is prescribed. With cleansed tongue, *Nit ac* (potency 30C) thrice a day is used and with extensive destruction of tissue, *Kali chlor* (potency 30C) thrice a day is recommended. ^[5] A transient form of gingivitis is pregnancy gingivitis, for which Mercurius solubilis (6C) twice a day is used for treatment. ^[11]

Patients with oral herpetic lesions could be given Graphites (Potency 7C), Petroleum (Potency 9C), Rhus toxicodendron (Potency 7C) and Arsenicum album (Potency 7C) and the lesions resolve early with minimum discomfort to patients. [1] Feverfew is prescribed for relieving discomfort caused by mouth ulcers. [1] This should be continued for a couple of days after the ulcers have healed to stop the pattern of recurrent attacks. On the contrary, Arsenicum album 6C twice a day and Natrum phosphoricum 30C once a day are often prescribed for mucosal lesions like lichen planus. [11]

For acute Migraine, Sanguinari 200C and Spigellia 200C are given for the right and left sides. [11] Plantago can be topically applied on painful areas of the skin or mucosa every 15 minutes. [11]

Calcarea carbonica 6C twice a week are prescribed for patients with numerous sialoliths, whereas for ranula, Thuja occidentalis 6C and Mercurius solubilis 6C once a day are prescribed. [11] A case of oro-sinus fistula with no improvement can be treated with Hydrofluoric acidum 6C twice a day and Silicea 6C effectively. [11]

Candidiasis is the most common opportunistic infections. Broax 30C three times a day is the main medication for this purpose. Kali muriaticum 6C and Natrum muriaticum 6C can be used every four hours as well. If not treated, Psorinum 30C once a day is prescribed. [11] Bryonia alba are given for the patients with great thirst and Pulsatilla are given to the patients having no thirst. [5]

Halitosis can be very disturbing at times. At such times, Carboveg (potency 30C) with Merc sol (potency 30C) twice daily are given to patients followed by the desired dental treatment. [5] Another disorder of psychological origin which patients often face is Bruxism and for that patients are given Cina (potency 30C) one hour prior to sleep and during daytime nux vomica (potency 30C) two times a day till the symptoms subside. [4]

The systemic condition of the body influences the dental health of the individual as well and if it is not maintained its consequences are reflected upon the dental treatment. In India, More than 10 crores of old aged people are comorbid [12] which affects the treatment modalities. As we all know periodontitis is the complication of uncontrolled diabetes. Patients suffering from multiple comorbidities such as diabetes accompanied with tuberculosis lung or extra pulmonary tuberculosis should be kept under observation [13] and their sugar levels should be brought back to normal first and then the subsequent treatment should be performed. The antidiabetic drugs chiefly focus on orderly insulin production as required by the body. These include Plumbum Met, Heper Sulph, Tarentula and Oxalicum Acidum. [14]

Choice of Potency -

Homeopathic applications are prescribed as low potency (less than 12 X), medium potency (12X to 30X), high potency (30X to 200X) based on the manifestations and traits of patients. The X represents 10, and signifies that the mother tincture has been diluted to one part in 100. The potency of homeopathic medicine depends on whether the dental condition is acute or chronic. Lower potency is used for acute condition and higher potency for chronic conditions. [1]

Limitations of Homeopathy:

Some diseases are physical and cause irreversible structural changes such as wounds, traumas, kidney stones, deep caries, root fracture, etc. In such cases, conventional treatments should be necessarily performed but homeopathic medications can also enhance the course of recovery or alleviate pain.^[11]

In cases with advanced stages of cancer, reinstatement of vital body force is not possible and homeopathy may not be able to help such patients.^[11]

Cardiovascular emergencies, shocks and some acute conditions need urgent medical care and homeopathy is not indicated for such patients.^[11]

-Foreign bodies, thrombosis, tumors and cysts, epilepsy, polycystic kidney disease and nutritional and vitamin deficiencies are among conditions requiring medical attention.^[11]

Conclusion -

Homeopathy has a defined space in the present day dental setting.^[1] It is not a substitution for the expertise of the dentist but is an essential complement in many ways, specially to assist those who are anxious or suffer from dental problems which do not respond to traditional therapy protocols. Homeopathic medicaments are helpful for extensive and vast therapeutics ranging from comparatively mild and acute pain to persistent long-standing diseases. Homeopathy is an area of dental medicine that is coming up and is being used in managing disorders of orofacial structures. With the benefit of least adverse reactions and appreciative treatment results, the application of homeopathy in dentistry is an invention that brings up new clinical and scientific options and possibilities, especially since a lot of manifestations of systemic diseases are noticed in the mouth first. Altogether, homeopathy seems to emerge and stay as a part of the physician's armamentarium to prevent and cure the diseases. Homeopathy can be used as a supportive therapy in dental health and in general to the welfare of the patients.^[6]

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