

ARNICA MONTANA AND HYPERICUM IN DENTAL PRACTICE:

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Post extraction pain and swelling is faced universally by dental surgeons all over. Prescribing an analgesic and antibiotic is routine practice followed by almost all. But both these drugs have got one or other side effects. Routine use of antibiotic leads to allergic reactions, emergence of resistant strains and undesirable side effects. Hence an attempt is made to find out the efficacy of the two drugs—Arnica montana and Hypericum for post-extraction pain and swelling.

PATIENTS AND METHOD

Two hundred male/female patients between the age group of 12 and 18 selected at random form the study material. One hundred and fifty patients received pills of Arnica and Hypericum. Remaining fifty patients received placebo. All patients received four pills of each of the two drugs. One group received A and B whereas the other got C and D. All pills were of identical size and shape. Patients were asked to chew the pills four at a time of one drug and followed by another four pills of the other drug after fifteen minute interval. Patients were asked not to take anything solid or liquid for forty-five minutes after or prior of taking the pills.

Patients were also requested to desist from taking strong aromatic foods, e.g. onion, garlic and strong coffee etc. The method of evaluating the analgesic activity was similar to that described by Loan *et al*¹ (1968). Patients were asked to grade pain and swelling after twenty-four and forty-eight hours on the following arbitrary scale:

(1) Very severe pain and swelling	...	4
(2) Severe pain	...	3
(3) Moderate pain	...	2
(4) Slight pain	...	1
(5) No pain	...	0

Swelling was examined after twenty-four and forty-eight hours by the investigator. Patients showing score 0 and 1 were designated as positive responders and all other patients were grouped as negative responders. Results were analysed by X^2 test. Potency of the drugs used was 200. Attached table shows detailed results.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Available information regarding these two homoeopathic medicines is not out of place.

Arnica—(a) Synonym: *Arnica montana*, (b) Natural order: Compositae, (c) Common name: Leopard's Bane, (d) Habitat: A perennial herb growing in mountainous districts of the northern hemisphere, (e) Preparation: Tincture from the root, leaves and flowers, mixed.

The chief use² of Arnica is in the treatment of acute or chronic bad effects, even inflammation from mechanical injuries. It is sufficient to say that Arnica is useful in any disease of any organ or tissue where the disease results directly from traumatic causes. The power of Arnica to prevent pyaemia is wonderful, and makes its application after injuries and surgical operations the more important. It prevents suppuration and septicaemia and helps absorption³.

The best known effect of Arnica is its remedial action in mechanical injuries³—Arnica for injuries is the most prominent symptom and it is of equal value whether the injury is of recent origin or remote.

It is a great remedy in all cases of concussion, sprain or other sufferings from mechanical violence⁵.

Hypericum—(a) Synonym: *Hypericum perforatum*, (b) Natural order: Hypericaceae, (c) Common name: St. John's Wort, (d) Habitat: A perennial plant abundant in Europe and America, (e) Preparation: Tincture from the whole fresh plant.

It is a valuable remedy to relieve the pain following surgical operations, lacerated wounds, punctured wounds, crushed wounds etc.² The drug is generally indicated by the excessive pain and soreness in the affected parts.

A wound will sometimes yawn, swell up, red, inflamed, burning stinging, tearing pains⁴ such wound needs Hypericum.

The principal condition⁴ in which we use the remedy is the results following injuries to nerves, recent or remote. It is to be thought of for mashed, lacerated, gunshot and penetrating wounds from pointed instruments, especially in parts rich in nerves.

It has proved itself as much a specific in injuries of the nervous system⁵ as Arnica has in injuries of the muscular system.

It is useful in mechanical injuries, wounds by nails or splinters in the feet, needles under the nails, squeezing or hammering of the toes and fingers, especially the tips of the fingers, when the nerves have been lacerated, wounded or torn with excruciating pains.

Denton & Beecher⁷ in 1949 suggested that new analgesic drug should always be compared with placebo. Though Arnica and Hypericum are widely used in homoeopathic practice with proved efficacy there is only single report from India about the efficacy in dental practice and hence in this study it was compared with placebo.

Clinical assessment of pain and swelling is difficult as pain and swelling cannot be accurately quantified. Hence the assessment of the intensity of as well as relief from pain and swelling must remain subjective.

Attached results show efficacy of the combination of Arnica and Hyperic-

cum. 93% of the patients were relieved of pain and swelling, by this combination.

In conclusion combination of *Hypericum* and *Arnica* has proved to be a satisfactory analgesic and anti-inflammatory in dental practice.

The costs of these medicines being low, the treatment with these pills will cost patients merely a few paise only, and these medicines will be suitable and beneficial to the patients in the poor country like ours.

ANALGESIC AND ANTI-INFLAMMATORY EFFECT

Name of drug	No. of patients	No. of patients showing +ve response after 24 hours	No. of patients showing +ve response after 48 hours	No. of patients showing -ve response	Significance
Arnica and <i>Hypericum</i>	150	135	5	10	P<0.001
Placebo	50	0	8	42	

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Editorial comment: It is suggested that instead of administering *Arnica* and *Hypericum* alternately only one of the two is administered, *Arnica* where the contusion and bruised injury dominate and *Hypericum*, where the injury to nerves and nerve endings is greater. As for the potency and repetition of doses. the only known measure is the patient's susceptibility and not a uniform potency and repetition as experimented upon by the learned authors. They are just lucky that there has been no hypersensitive patient in the lot they experimented on or else, the repetition could have resulted in precipitating a serious aggravation.