

CASE RECORD

A case of vitiligo treated with phosphorus

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Abstract

Vitiligo a disease of cosmetic problem has much psychosocial impact. The success rate in treating this condition in conventional medicines is limited and sometimes, treatment follows with side effects. Though a few case records are documented in the past about the success of various homoeopathic medicines, yet they lack proper quantitative assessment. This is a case documented from the ongoing clinical research study on vitiligo at Clinical Research Unit (Homoeopathy), Chennai. The case was treated with Phosphorus over a period of 17 months with steady improvement which is evident from the photographs and improvement in baseline scores of presentation of the case. The outcome of the ongoing multicentric clinical research study will reveal further regarding the effect of homoeopathic medicine in Vitiligo.

Keywords: homoeopathy; vitiligo; segmentary vitiligo; phosphorus

Introduction

Vitiligo is an acquired loss of pigmentation characterized histologically by absence of epidermal melanocytes. The word vitiligo is derived from the Greek word 'vitilius', meaning 'calf'. The white spots of vitiligo resemble white patches on a calf. It may be an autoimmune disease associated with antibodies (vitiligo antibodies) to melanocytes. Studies suggest there is some genetic mechanism involved in the etiology of vitiligo and that it is polygenic in nature¹.

Vitiligo has much psychosocial impact. Many studies show that there is a lot of social stigma, low self esteem, adjustment disorder, poor body image and low quality of life associated with vitiligo patients²⁻¹⁰. Though it is usually known that vitiligo is only a cosmetic problem, yet a number of conditions may occur in association with vitiligo¹¹.

Various systems of medicine have claimed to have good results but not without side effects, like erythema, xerodermia, pruritus, acne form pustules and telangiectasia¹².

Few case records have been documented in the past showing the effectiveness of homoeopathy in the

treatment of vitiligo¹³⁻²⁰. But no where a quantitative assessment of the patches on the basis of some score or scale has been attempted. This is one of the case records of segmental vitiligo, which documents the effect of homoeopathic medicine through quantitative evaluation.

Data collection

The case was selected from the OPD of Clinical Research Unit, Chennai, where a research project on vitiligo is going on. Case was enrolled as per the protocol of the clinical study on vitiligo and accordingly baseline assessment was done (table-2). The assesment score chart (table-1) was developed by Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy for its ongoing project on clinical research study on vitiligo. The photographs were also taken at a fixed intervals.

Case summary

The patient, a girl of 10 years old, presented with de-pigmented patches behind both ears (pic.2 and 3), below the right knee (antero-medial aspect of rt. lower limb 2 inches below rt. knee)(pic. 4), back of neck extended up to occiput with white hairs of the patch [nape of neck and occiput] (pic.1), for last 2 years. Lesions started first behind both ears as small patches, and later, on other parts of body. Spread of the patches was very slow. Patient had received conventional treatment for a period of one year without any improvement.

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Patient had desire for open air, fruits, fried food, fish, ice cream and meat. She could not tolerate warmth. Mentally the patient was childish, quarrelsome, tearful with alternate cheerfulness; had fear of being alone, cockroaches; intolerant to contradiction and threw herself on floor when angry.

There is no family history of vitiligo. Her childhood history had no significant events. On examination it was found that she had no systemic problem; fair complexion; thin body built; weight 31kgs, height 152cms.

Table-1: Assessment score chart

Type	0 Improving	1 Stationary	2 Resistant	3 Progressive
Site of the lesion		1 Follicular	2 Mucosal	3 Acral
No of Patches	0 Absent	1 Single patch	2 Segmentary	3 Generalized/Universal
Hair in patch	0 Black		2 White	
Margins of patch		1 Normal	2 Inflamed	
Colour of patch	0 Normal (Body colour)	1 Pigment spots on patch	2 Pink/red	3 Milky white
Re-pigmentation	0 Fully pigmented	1 Perifollicular pigmentation	2 Hyper-pigmentation of margins	3 No pigmentation
Grading Score	MILD (2 - 6)	MODERATE (7 -12)		SEVERE (13- 19)

Table-2: Baseline assessment score of the patient on first visit

Type		3 Progressive
Site of the lesion	1 Follicular	
No of Patches		2 Segmentary
Hair in patch		2 White
Margins of patch	1 Normal	
Colour of patch		3 Milky white
Re-pigmentation		3 No pigmentation
Grade - Severe Total score-15		

Table-4: Follow ups along with score

		Follow ups				
		At entry				
Date		31.1.07	14.2.07	09.05.07	12.7.07	18.6.08
Vitiligo areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back sides of both ears • Below the right knee [anteromedial aspect of rt. lower limb, 2 inches below right knee] • Back side of neck [occiput and nape of neck] with white hair. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back sides of both ears • Below the right knee [anteromedial aspect of rt. lower limb, 2 inches below right knee] • Back side of neck [occiput and nape of neck] with white hair. <p>There was no change in number of patches, no change in color of patch, mild perifollicular pigmentation observed in the margin of the patches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back sides of both ears • Below the right knee [anteromedial aspect of rt. lower limb, 2 inches below Right. knee] • Back side of neck [occiput and nape of neck] with white. hair. <p>Note: <i>Improvement became static.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back sides of both ears • Below the right knee [anteromedial aspect of rt. Lower limb, 2 inches below Right. knee] • Back side of neck [occiput and nape of neck] with grey hair. The patches are improving to normal skin and the hair becoming grey in color 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Back sides of both ears completely covered with repigmentation and showed normal skin • Below the right knee [anteromedial aspect of rt. Lower limb, 2 inches below right. knee] almost covered with repigmentation • Back side of neck [occiput and nape of neck] with grey hair-completely covered with repigmentation and showed normal skin. 	
Score	Picture (1, 4, 7, 10)	15	11	09	07	0
Medicine	Phosphorus 30C, single dose with placebo	Phosphorus 30C, single dose with placebo	Placebo	Phosphorus 30C, single dose with placebo	Placebo	Placebo
	Picture (3, 6, 9, 12)					

Photographs showing the Vitiligo patches at different locations at entry and during treatment

At entry on 31.1.2007



Pic. 1

During treatment as on 12.7.2007



Pic. 2

During treatment as on 18.6.2008



Pic. 3

At entry on 31.1.2007



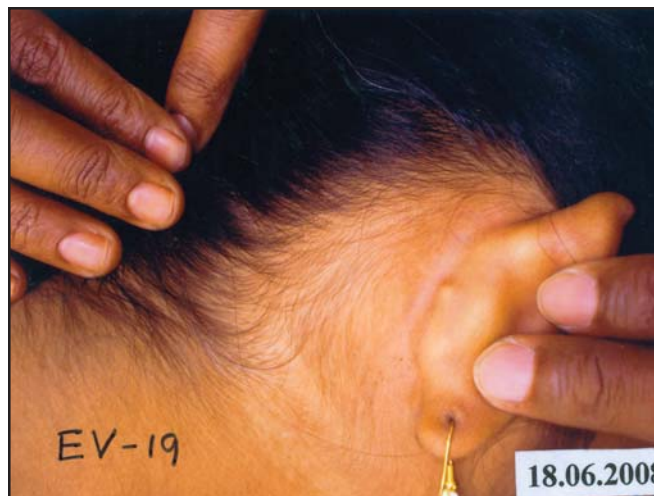
Pic. 4

During treatment as on 12.7.2007



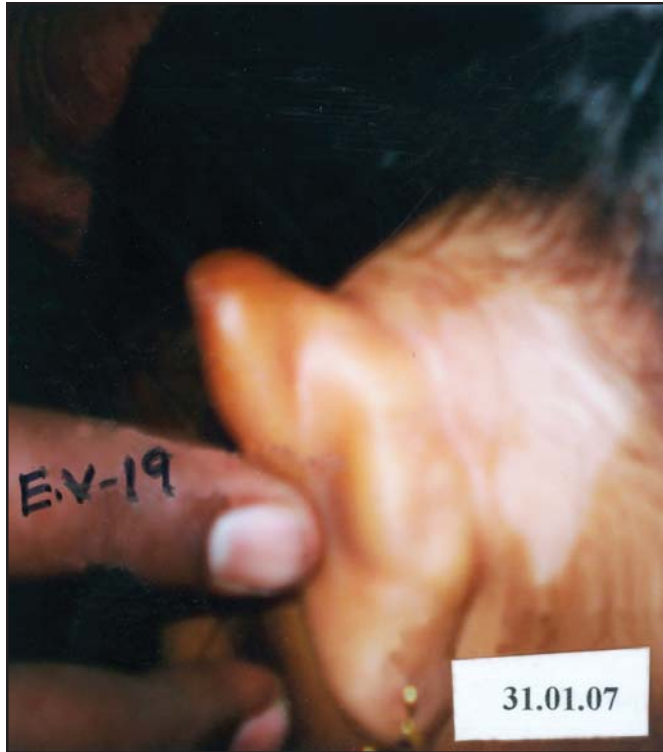
Pic. 5

During treatment as on 18.6.2008



Pic. 6

At entry on 31.1.2007



Pic. 7

During treatment as on 12.7.2007



Pic. 8

During treatment as on 18.6.2008



Pic. 9

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At entry on 31.1.2007



Pic. 10

During treatment as on 12.7.2007



Pic. 11

During treatment as on 18.6.2008



Pic. 12

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