

Homoeopathy research – Building up the evidence

This issue of the *Indian Journal of Research in Homoeopathy* broadly showcases the clinical and basic research undertaken in Homoeopathy. The methodological quality and design of homoeopathic clinical trials have been questioned and criticised often. Thus, in the quest to provide impetus to improve the standards of clinical trials in Homoeopathy, it is necessary that research protocols with well-defined rationale, robust research methodology with a clear description of design, setting, participants, outcomes, statistical analysis and ethical approvals are published in the journal. This issue includes a research protocol on randomised controlled trial (RCT) of acute otitis media which can be used as a resource for learning and reference.^[1] The feedback, comments and suggestions can be utilised for improving future trials.

An RCT conducted to assess the role of *Lycopodium clavatum* for the management of urolithiasis is included in this issue. In this RCT, patients with symptomatology indicating prescription for *Lycopodium clavatum* were enrolled and randomised into two groups (verum and placebo). Although no significant difference was found in the expulsion of stones or size of stone expelled in both the groups, a positive trend for relief of symptoms (dysuria and pain) using Homoeopathy was seen,^[2] but a verified symptom syndrome of *Lycopodium clavatum* could be deduced.

Besides clinical trials, current research in Homoeopathy is also focused to see the biological activity of homoeopathic medicines in laboratory-based models. An *in-vitro* study to assess the antimicrobial effect of homoeopathic drugs in different potencies against *Aspergillus niger*^[3] has been carried out, wherein 15 homoeopathic medicines were tested for their biological activity using the disc diffusion method according to the clinical and laboratory standard (CLSIM44-A) with slight modification. The mother tincture of homoeopathic medicine *Zingiber officinale* showed the maximum zone of inhibition compared to other medicines used in the experiment. Besides this, several studies have been published that demonstrate the antioxidant and antibacterial potential of homoeopathic mother tinctures,^[4,5] however, all these potentials are yet to be significantly established and re-confirmed with potencies, and further experiments must be taken up for strengthening the evidence.

The homoeopathic drugs are prepared following well-defined methods from different sources such as plants, animals and minerals besides others such as *Sarcodes* (healthy bodily secretions from glands), nosodes (disease-producing agents or diseased products) and imponderabilia (different sources such as energy from natural and physical reactions).^[6] Samuel Hahnemann has described the methods and processes of preparing homoeopathic mother tincture i.e., source

of potentised medicines/high dilutions by specifically categorising into different classes based on their sources. Although some of the processes explained by Hahnemann are now discarded, many of them have been evolved and included in the official pharmacopoeias. Several queries and safety concerns arise while homoeopaths use these medicines prepared from some part of animals or from their secretions.^[7] The authenticity of medicines which are prepared from animal sources remains contentious. The review article in this issue explores and characterises the bioactive chemicals present in the animal-based homoeopathic medicine.^[8] The homoeopathic indications along with respective biomedicine research on the same medicine sources have been compiled by the authors. It is interesting to note the author's observation that biomedical and medicinal chemistry research findings justify the old homoeopathic literature, and this must be further researched.

Other aspects of homoeopathic research which focused on generating evidence base through many subjective variables in Homoeopathy are discussed in the paper "Proving nonconventional methods" in this issue.^[9] Dr Lex Rutten has presented patients' perspective of using Homoeopathy in chronic diseases through an individualised approach. The physician perspective and credibility of Homoeopathy is explained along with the modern theories to substantiate the effectiveness of Homoeopathy.

The case report of a patient with vocal cord nodules treated homoeopathically is also included in the issue^[10] along with Research Update of all the researches published in the quarter for reference and reading.^[11] It is hoped that readers would gain from this issue and contribute in building the scientific evidence base for Homoeopathy.

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