

Evidence- based homoeopathy: Case report of alopecia areata in an 11 year old boy

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Abstract

Introduction: Alopecia areata (AA) is an autoimmune disease characterised by non-scarring hair loss in single or multiple areas of the scalp. The disease affects hair on the head or other parts of the body. AA occurs in people of all ages and affects 1-2% of human population. Homoeopathic literature shows that cases of AA have been treated successfully with homoeopathic medicines. **Case Summary:** This is the case of an 11 years old boy with alopecia areata. The case presented here is documented from Dermatology clinic at Regional Research Institute of Homoeopathy at Gudivada, Andhra Pradesh. The patient was treated with individualised homoeopathic medicine over a period of 3 years. There was significant improvement with homoeopathic treatment, with complete disappearance of bald patches without any recurrence.

Keywords: Alopecia areata, Autoimmune, Homoeopathy, Inflammation, *Lycopodium clavatum*

INTRODUCTION

Alopecia areata (AA) is an autoimmune disorder characterised by patches of non-scarring alopecia affecting scalp and body hair. The disease may be limited to one or more discrete, well-circumscribed, round or oval patches of hair loss on the scalp or body or it may affect the entire scalp (alopecia totalis) or the entire body (alopecia universalis). The lifetime incidence of AA is approximately 2% worldwide.^[1] It affects people of all ages and both sexes. Loss of hair is considered as an autoimmune process leading to chronic inflammation due to the presence of organ-specific CD8⁺ T-cell-dependent response mainly affecting hair follicles. Various triggers such as infections, trauma, hormones and stress are known to worsen the disease. Genetic component plays an important role with a likelihood of severe symptoms seen in first-degree relatives. Its association with other autoimmune diseases such as vitiligo, lupus erythematosus, psoriasis, atopic dermatitis, thyroid disease, allergic rhinitis, pernicious anaemia, diabetes mellitus and rheumatoid arthritis is known.^[2]

There is no specific treatment for AA cases. However, topical immunotherapy, intralesional and topical or systemic corticosteroids are used in patients with AA. Other treatment options include immunosuppressant and biologics medicines. The patients under treatment with these drugs should be

constantly clinically monitored due to the adverse effects that can be generated.^[3] An important element of the management of AA cases is offering psychological support. With psychological support and education about the disease, long-term improvement can be achieved.^[4] The diagnosis is clinical and generally simple in the common cases. In diffuse chronic forms, trichogram and biopsy is advised.^[5]

Sharquie and Al-Obaidi^[6] investigated the effectiveness of topical crude onion juice in the treatment of patchy AA in comparison with tap water. An Iranian research group investigated the effectiveness of topical garlic gel in the treatment of AA.^[7] Xie^[8] described a case report of a girl with AA treated with a traditional Chinese medicine concoction. Hay *et al*^[9] treated AA with aromatherapy with significant improvement. However, despite all the positive results, unfortunately, no study was of sufficient internal validity to provide robust evidence of the benefit of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) in AA.

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Table 2: Time line including follow-up of the case

Date	Symptoms	Medicine with doses, repetition	Justification
17 November 2012	No change noted on bald patches	<i>Lycopodium</i> 30C/once a day/30 days	As there were no changes observed, the same medicine was continued
26 December 2012	New hair growth appeared on bald patches	<i>Lycopodium</i> 30C/once a day/30 days	As changes on bald patches were noted, <i>Lycopodium</i> 30C was repeated
12 February 2013	Small hairs observed on bald patches	<i>Lycopodium</i> 30C/once a day/30 days	As there was improvement observed on bald patches, <i>Lycopodium</i> 30C was continued
19 April 2013	New hair growth was noticed on bald patches	<i>Lycopodium</i> 30C/once a day/30 days	As there appeared new hair growth on bald patches, the same medicine was continued
16 July 2013	No change observed on bald patches	<i>Lycopodium</i> 30C/once a day/30 days	No change was noticed. Therefore, <i>Lycopodium</i> 30C was repeated
25 August 2013	No change noted on bald patches	<i>Lycopodium</i> 30C/once a day/30 days	Complaints persisted without any change. <i>Lycopodium</i> 30C was continued
24 September 2013	No improvement observed. Complaints <i>status quo</i>	<i>Lycopodium</i> 200/once a week Sac lac/once a day/30 days	In view of no further improvement, potency of the medicine was raised, <i>Lycopodium</i> 200 was prescribed
26 November 2013	New hair growth appeared on bald patches. The patient was advised to visit after 2 months	<i>Lycopodium</i> 200/once a week Sac lac/once a day/60 days	As there was improvement noted, <i>Lycopodium</i> 200 was continued
23 February 2014	Slow and continuous improvement observed in bald patches	<i>Lycopodium</i> 200/once a week Sac lac/once a day/60 days	Considering improvement in complaints, <i>Lycopodium</i> 200 was repeated
28 April 2014	Improvement noted in hair growth on the head	<i>Lycopodium</i> 200/once a week Sac lac/once a day/60 days	There was new hair growth. Therefore, the same medicine was continued
24 June 2014	Complaints persisted, no further improvement	<i>Lycopodium</i> 200/once a week Sac lac/once a day/60 days	Complaints continued without any change. <i>Lycopodium</i> 200 continued
22 August 2014	No further improvement in hair growth	<i>Lycopodium</i> 200/once a week Sac lac/once a day/60 days	No further progress in hair growth was noted. <i>Lycopodium</i> 200 was continued
27 October 2014	Complaints <i>status quo</i>	<i>Lycopodium</i> 1M/once a week Sac lac/once a day/30 days	In view of no further improvement, potency of medicine was raised. <i>Lycopodium</i> 1M was prescribed
26 November 2014	New hair growth observed on bald patches	<i>Lycopodium</i> 1M/once a week Sac lac/once a day/60 days	There was considerable decrease in the size of bald patches and new hair growth. Therefore, the same medicine was continued
3 January 2015	All bald patches covered with hair without any bald patch on the head	<i>Lycopodium</i> 1M/once a week Sac lac/once a day/60 days	As there was marked improvement noted, the same medicine was repeated
11 March 2015	Marked improvement observed in all bald patches	<i>Lycopodium</i> 1M/once a week Sac lac/once a day/60 days	There was distinct improvement in the bald patches, <i>Lycopodium</i> 1M was repeated
27 May 2015	Complete disappearance of bald patches on the head	Sac lac/once a day/60 days	As there was complete disappearance of bald patches on head, Sac lac was prescribed
3 August 2015	Significant improvement of hair growth on the head without any recurrence of new bald patches	Sac lac/once a day/60 days	Complete disappearance of the bald patches on the head without any recurrence of any other new bald patch, Sac lac was continued
7 October 2015	Complete growth of hair on the head	Sac lac/once a day/60 days	Complete disappearance of bald patches on head, without recurrence of any bald patches, for over a period of 3 years of homoeopathic treatment, Sac lac was prescribed

DISCUSSION

The patient presented with multiple bald patches on the head. There was no family history of AA or other autoimmune disease in the family. This case treated with individualised homoeopathic medicine showed complete hair re-growth without any recurrence in a follow-up period. As there is no effective treatment in conventional medicine, a substantial number of AA patients resort to CAM. Itamura^[12] reported an Alopecia universalis case treated with *Mercurius* with significant improvement. Willemsen *et al.*^[13] used hypnosis to treat AA.

In this case, after careful history recording, repertorisation and consultation with *Materia Medica*, *Lycopodium* medicine was prescribed. The patient showed improvement in the beginning which proved correct selection of the medicine, but there was slow improvement with low-potency *Lycopodium* 30C. However, marked improvement was observed with higher 1M potency. This case shows the effective role of homoeopathic medicine in treating AA when prescribed on the basis of homoeopathic principles.



Figure 1: Before treatment



Figure 2: During treatment



Figure 3a: After treatment



Figure 3b: After treatment

CONCLUSION

Homoeopathy is a specialised system of medicine. It treats patient as whole and not just symptoms. A complete hair re-growth without any recurrence of bald patches is a documentary evidence [Figures 1-3]. This case shows a positive role of Homoeopathy in treating AA. However, as this is a single case study and AA is associated with a variable and unpredictable remission,^[14] well-designed studies may be taken up for scientific validation of results.

Declaration of patient consent

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent forms. In the form, the patient has given his consent for his images and other clinical information to be reported in the journal. The patient understands that his name and initial will not be published, and due efforts will be made to conceal his identity, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

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Conflicts of interest

None declared.

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साक्ष्य-आधारित होम्योपैथी: 11 साल के लड़के में एलोपेशिया एरिएटा की केस रिपोर्ट

परिचय : एलोपेशिया एरिएटा (एए), खोपड़ी के एकल या कई क्षेत्रों में बालों के झड़ने की विशेषता वाली एक ऑटोइम्यून बीमारी है। यह रोग सिर या शरीर के अन्य हिस्सों पर बालों को प्रभावित करता है। एलोपेशिया एरिएटा सभी उम्र के लोगों में होता है और 1-2 प्रतिशत मानव आबादी को प्रभावित करता है। होम्योपैथिक साहित्य से यह पता चलता है कि एलोपेशिया एरिएटा के प्रकरणों का इलाज होम्योपैथिक दवाओं के साथ सफलतापूर्वक किया गया है। प्रकरण संक्षेपिका : यह एलोपेशिया एरिएटा से ग्रसित 11 साल के लड़के का प्रकरण है। प्रस्तुत प्रकरण आंध्र प्रदेश के गुडीवाड़ा में क्षेत्रीय अनुसंधान संस्थान होम्योपैथी के त्वचाविज्ञान क्लिनिक से प्रलेखित है। रोगी को 3 वर्ष की अवधि में व्यक्तिगत होम्योपैथिक दवा के साथ इलाज किया गया था। होम्योपैथिक उपचार के साथ महत्वपूर्ण सुधार हुआ, बिना किसी पुनरावृत्ति के गंजेपन के पैच पूरी तरह से गायब हो गये।

Homéopathie fondée sur des résultats probants : rapport de cas d'alopecie areata chez un garçon de 11 ans

Introduction L'alopecie areata (AA) est une maladie auto-immune caractérisée par une perte de cheveux non cicatricielle dans des zones uniques ou multiples du cuir chevelu. Cette maladie affecte les cheveux ou les poils sur d'autres parties du corps. L'AA se manifeste chez les personnes de tous âges et affecte 1 à 2% de la population humaine. La littérature homéopathique montre que les cas d'AA ont été traités avec succès par des médicaments homéopathiques. **Résumé du cas :** Il s'agit du cas d'un garçon de 11 ans atteint d'alopecie areata. Le cas présenté ici est documenté par la clinique de dermatologie de l'Institut régional de recherche en homéopathie de Gudivada en Andhra Pradesh. Le patient a été traité avec un médicament homéopathique personnalisé sur une période de 3 ans. Il y a eu une amélioration nette avec le traitement homéopathique qui s'est accompagné de la disparition complète des parties chauves sans aucune récurrence.

Homeopatía basada en evidencia: informe de caso clínico de alopecia areata en un niño de 11 años

Introducción La alopecia areata (AA) es una enfermedad autoinmune caracterizada por una pérdida de cabello no cicatrizante en zonas individuales o múltiples del cuero cabelludo. La enfermedad afecta el cabello de la cabeza u otras partes del cuerpo. La AA se produce en personas de todas las edades y afecta al 1 - 2 % de la población humana. La bibliografía homeopática muestra que los casos de AA han sido tratados con éxito con medicamentos homeopáticos. **Resumen del caso:** Se trata de un niño de 11 años con alopecia areata. El caso aquí presentado está documentado en la Clínica Dermatológica del *Regional Research Institute of Homoeopathy* en Gudivada, Andhra Pradesh. El paciente fue tratado con un medicamento homeopático individualizado durante un periodo de 2 años. Con el medicamento homeopático, se consiguió una mejoría significativa con la completa remisión de las zonas alopecicas sin recurrencia.

Evidenzbasierte Homöopathie: Fallbericht einer Alopecia areata in einem 11-jährigen Junge

Einführung Die Alopecia areata (AA) ist eine Autoimmunkrankheit, die sich durch einen nicht vernarbenden Haarausfall an einzelnen oder mehreren Haarkopfstellen kennzeichnet. Die Krankheit befällt das Kopfhaar und andere behaarte Zonen des Körpers. Sie kommt bei Menschen jeden Alters vor und wird in 1-2 % der menschlichen Bevölkerung beobachtet. In der homöopathischen Literatur werden erfolgreiche homöopathische Behandlungen der AA verzeichnet. **Zusammenfassung des Falls:** Es handelt sich um den Fall eines 11-jährigen Jungen mit Alopecia areata. Der hier vorgestellte Fall wurde von der Hautklinik im *Regional Research Institute of Homoeopathy* in Gudivada, Andhra Pradesh, dokumentiert. Der Patient wurde während eines Zeitraumes von 3 Jahren mit den entsprechend individualisierten homöopathischen Mittel behandelt. Dank der homöopathischen Therapie ergab sich eine signifikante Besserung mit dem vollkommenen Verschwinden der kahlen Stellen und ohne Rezidive.

實証爲本的順勢療法：一個11歲男孩的斑禿個案

簡介：斑禿 (Alopecia areata, AA) 是一種自身免疫性疾病，其特徵是頭皮單個或多個部位無疤痕脫髮。這種疾病影響頭部或身體其他部位的毛髮。AA發生在所有年齡段的人群中，影響1-2% 的人口。順勢療法文獻顯示，有用順勢療法藥物成功治療AA的病例。

病例總結：這是一個11歲男孩斑禿的情況。此病例由安得拉邦古迪夫達地區順勢療法研究所皮膚病診所作記錄。病人接受了爲期3年的個人化順勢療法治療，並有顯著改善，禿斑完全消失，無復發。