

## Homoeopathy in epidemics: Bridging the gap

This special issue of IJRH has been planned keeping in view the ongoing pandemic of the novel coronavirus disease, COVID-19. As a research council, it was felt that it is our responsibility to bring forth scientific information that could be useful for all the stakeholders involved in the efficient management of the current pandemic. The impact of such research publications on the scientific, medical and political experts would enable a rational approach to treatment with a clear perspective of the strengths and weaknesses of Homoeopathy, and how best can the opportunities be availed for the benefit of society at large.

Further, a factsheet on ‘Homoeopathic Perspectives in COVID-19 coronavirus infection’<sup>[1]</sup> has been prepared and is available at the Council’s website: [ccrhindia.nic.in](http://ccrhindia.nic.in).

### WHY HOMOEOPATHY?

An effective, safe, evidence-based and less invasive treatment is the need of the hour in the current scenario. Utilising Homoeopathy for such a virulent disease may seem bizarre to the skeptics since the mechanisms of action are not well understood by them. However, the homoeopathic fraternity and users are well aware of the benefits of Homoeopathy use in the epidemics over the last century. An article in this issue narrates the role Homoeopathy has played in controlling epidemics afflicting the humankind in the past, summarising the scope of this approach in the current COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>[2]</sup> Another paper in this issue covering the 1918 Spanish flu highlights the role played by the homoeopathic medicines for successful treatment of pandemic Spanish flu 1918.<sup>[3]</sup> The analysis of testimonials of various homoeopathic doctors who treated Spanish flu patients reveals that Homoeopathy treatment had a significant role in reducing the mortality mostly between the age group of 21–40 years, with the use of different Homoeopathy remedies.

Moreover, one of the strengths of Homoeopathy is the holistic approach that takes account of the whole person: physical and mental, including all aspects of lifestyle. Even though influenza like illnesses (ILIs) are primarily evident through the physical manifestations in their acute phase, the psychological implications are manifold ranging from the traumatic experiences of health-care providers and caregivers, the suffering patients themselves in isolation or quarantine, the common people facing information overload and social-emotional distancing due to prolonged lockdown, to the ones who will experience long term psychological effects due to social discrimination of this situation. To discuss this aspect and see what Homoeopathy has to offer, we have included a paper on this topic in this issue.<sup>[4]</sup> A group of homoeopathic remedies is suggested that may be utilised in such scenario

based on the individual presentation and requirement of the cases.

Another unique concept of Homoeopathy is individualisation. The importance of inter-individual variations and the role of immune modulation through cytokine induction behind such variations in patient symptoms are discussed in a review article in this issue.<sup>[5]</sup> Such studies which show the modulating effect of homoeopathic medicines on cytokine synthesis in a statistically significant manner provide a scientific basis to validate the age old concepts of Homoeopathy.

### IS THERE EVIDENCE?

A systematic narrative review of the clinical research evidences for Homoeopathy in the management of infectious diseases has been included in this issue.<sup>[6]</sup> This comprehensive review demonstrates the evidence of benefit of Homoeopathy in infectious diseases such as acute diarrhoea, acute otitis media, respiratory tract infections, ILI, hepatitis, tuberculosis, dengue, chikungunya, japanese encephalitis/acute encephalitis syndrome, leptospirosis and many others. Several controlled trials, and uncontrolled studies have reported positive results, early recovery, reduction of hospital stay, less use of antibiotics and satisfaction of patients. Such studies throw light on the possible role of integration of Homoeopathy with the standard care for the treatment of different infectious diseases with high mortality and morbidity. There is a fundamental advantage of Homoeopathy that it can be given alongside allopathy; it will not have any side effects. Homoeopathy is absolutely safe to give to any age group of patients, be it a new born or an elderly person. Such an integration may lead to reduction in hospitalisation, costs, loss of workdays, in turn reducing the burden on hospitals, and health-care resources.

Homoeoprophylaxis (HP), i.e., medicine selected according to the law of similars to prevent targeted infectious diseases, was first used by Hahnemann in 1798 and has been used since to protect significant number of people against a range of infectious diseases in many countries. According to a study, the effectiveness of HP was between 63% and 99% with a weighted average around 90%, with proven benefits from the widespread use of appropriate HP interventions.<sup>[7]</sup> However, the evidence base needs to be improved in a range of ways. Requiring a standardised checklist to be completed by researchers both before and after an intervention offers one method to improve the quality and consistency of evidence collected. A proposed checklist for standardising HP interventions is thus studied in another paper of this issue.<sup>[8]</sup>

In Homoeopathy, nosodes are commonly used in clinical practice. Nosodes as isopathy are somewhat acceptable to

the mainstream medicine due to the similarity to vaccination. Nosodes prepared as per the homoeopathic principles have a potential as prophylactics in epidemics. Another review paper in this issue aims to explore the uses and possibilities with nosodes in management of epidemics.<sup>[9]</sup>

## ARE WE (HOMOEOPATHS) PREPARED?

In order to utilise the services of homoeopathic physicians effectively for the care and management of COVID-19 patients, a need was felt to first identify their knowledge, attitudes and practices about COVID-19. An online cross-sectional survey was thus undertaken and the findings are presented, which are quite interesting and encouraging.<sup>[10]</sup> I hope that such an attempt has provided us with a clear glimpse of the situation at hand, which is required to further prepare the roadmap for the coming times.

## WHY ARSENICUM ALBUM?

On 29<sup>th</sup> January, 2020, the members of our Scientific Advisory Board had unanimously affirmed that *Arsenicum album* 30 to be used as the genus epidemicus for the COVID-19 pandemic. This was based on the symptoms available from the patients in China, its special organ affinity for respiratory system, validation on previous ILIs studies, coverage of all stages of COVID-19 disease and also looking into the immunological response it has generated in previously reported study. However, we have received many opinions and queries of homoeopathic doctors in this regard. Therefore, in an attempt to clarify this, I have taken this opportunity to share the basis of the selection of this genus epidemicus. It is imperative to ascertain the usefulness of *Arsenicum album* 30 through well planned research studies to boost the evidence in favour of the drug.

## HOMOEOPATHY IN THE INDIAN PUBLIC HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The need to adopt an integrative approach in public healthcare system is now being emphasised in many countries; especially for the new emerging diseased conditions for which evidence-based established treatment modalities are not yet available. The objective is to utilise the scientifically supported therapies of all systems at best, with an open mind. A paper in this issue reflects on the importance of enabling the use of Homoeopathy in India's preparedness for pandemic situation and the means to achieve this.<sup>[11]</sup> The India's National Health Policy talks about the mainstreaming AYUSH systems and their role in shaping a healthier nation by making them available at all levels of healthcare facilities.<sup>[12]</sup> The efforts of Ministry of AYUSH in planning and implementation of scientific research for the promotion of use of AYUSH in this situation are commendable.

A report on World Homoeopathy Day webinar on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2020 by the Council in the midst of COVID-19 lockdown situation will further appraise you about the views of stalwarts of Homoeopathy.<sup>[13]</sup>

I hope that this special issue which presents comprehensive information relevant to the present times will be an interesting read for you. I eagerly look forward to your feedbacks and thoughts.

With this, I also appeal all the readers to stringently follow the guidelines and general measures as directed by the respective governments of your land, spread awareness among the community in your reach, dispelling their myths, abstain from spreading non-essential or fake information and keep the morale high to emerge as victorious in this war for the cause of humanity. I would end with a few lines from Dorothy Shepherd's book:<sup>[14]</sup>

*'One feels that Homeopathy is not clearly understood; it has been the Cinderella of Medicine for so long; it is time that this lowly handmaiden should shed her cloak of humility and come out of her obscurity and boldly proclaim the good she can do'.*

Anil Khurana

Editor-in-Chief

Email: [anil23101961@gmail.com](mailto:anil23101961@gmail.com)

Received: 08.05.2020; Accepted: 08.05.2020; Published: 29.05.2020

## REFERENCES

1. Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy. Homoeopathic Perspectives in COVID-19 Coronavirus Infection. Available from: <https://www.ccrhindia.nic.in/showimg.aspx?ID=15677>. [Last accessed 2020 Apr 30].
2. Chaudhary A, Khurana A. A review on the role of homoeopathy in epidemics with some reflections on COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2). *Indian J Res Homeopath* 2020;14:100-9.
3. Shinde V. Homoeopathy in pandemic Spanish flu 1918. *Indian J Res Homeopath* 2020;14:152-9.
4. Moorthi SK, Radhika P, Muraleedharan KC. Psychological implications during the outbreak of COVID-19 and its homoeopathic management. *Indian J Res Homeopath* 2020;14:136-42.
5. Mathur M, Kapoor A. A review on immunomodulatory response of homoeopathic medicines through cytokine induction as evidenced in *in vivo* and *in vitro* studies. *Indian J Res Homeopath* 2020;14:122-8.
6. Varanasi R, Nayak D. Homoeopathy in the management of infectious diseases: Different facets of its use and implications for future. *Indian J Res Homeopath* 2020;14:110-21.
7. Golden I. Large homoeoprophylaxis: Brief and long-term interventions. *Am J Homeopath Med* Winter 2019;112:31-6.
8. Golden I. Proposed checklist for standardising homoeoprophylaxis interventions. *Indian J Res Homeopath* 2020;14:80-9.
9. Nayak D. Homoeopathic nosodes, a neglected approach for epidemics: A critical review. *Indian J Res Homeopath* 2020;14:129-35.
10. Taneja D, Khurana A. An online cross-sectional survey on knowledge, attitudes, practices and perspectives of homoeopathic practitioners towards COVID-19. *Indian J Res Homeopath* 2020;14:90-9.
11. Azis SP, Kaur H. Enabling use of homoeopathy in India's preparedness for pandemic/epidemic situation like COVID-19. *Indian J Res Homeopath* 2020;14:143-51.
12. Ministry of Health & Family Welfare. Government of India, National Health Policy; 2017. Available from: <https://www.nhp.gov.in/nhpfiles/>

national\_health\_policy\_2017.pdf. [Last accessed on 2020 Apr 28].

13. Singh D, Verma OP, Bharti K. World homoeopathy day 2020: Connecting digitally during adversities of COVID-19 lockdown. Indian J Res Homeopath 2020;14:160-7.
14. Shepherd D. Magic of the Minimum Dose. New Delhi: B Jain Publishers (P) Ltd.; 1998.

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Access this article online

Quick Response Code:



Website:

[www.ijrh.org](http://www.ijrh.org)

DOI:

10.4103/ijrh.ijrh\_48\_20

**How to cite this article:** Khurana A. Homoeopathy in epidemics: Bridging the gap. Indian J Res Homoeopathy 2020;14:77-9.