

COVID-19: What lies ahead for Homoeopathy?

COVID-19

A lot is being said and done about the role of alternative medical systems in these COVID-19 times. This includes Homoeopathy.^[1,2] The more people are realising about the role of immunity in fighting this illness, the more they are turning towards alternative sciences for protection.^[3] This has been observed globally, with China being the first to put the use of Traditional Chinese Medicine in COVID-19 treatment on record.^[4] With the WHO removing its previous advisory of not taking traditional herbal remedies for COVID-19, the global demand has also grown.^[5] The potential role of AYUSH medicines in promoting immunity during COVID-19 has been internationally reported.^[6] It is predicted that the use of Traditional and Complementary Medicine during the pandemic may result in the further global adoption of alternative medicine and possibly its long-term acceptance as mainstream medicine.^[7]

The Homoeopathy sector has been quick and responsive to the need of humankind to offer preventive and curative treatment options. Homoeoprophylaxis studies are reported from Cuba^[8] and India.^[9,10] Meanwhile, *Arsenic album* is being prescribed by many homoeopathic doctors the world over as the preventive for the illness in many parts of the world, as per the knowledge gathered by interacting within the professional circle. Interestingly, the clinical trials with Homoeopathy as an add-on to the standard of care in hospitalised cases of COVID-19 have also initiated eventually in some parts of the world, including India. These primarily refer to moderate and severe cases. Seeking permissions for such trials and getting clearance of the ethical committees of the hospitals for such trials is a task in itself. Nevertheless, our profession has risen to this opportunity and taken to the task of proving the role of Homoeopathy in the ongoing pandemic. There is, however, a need to address post-COVID sequelae which, in spite of getting negative coronavirus test, patients continue to suffer from respiratory complaints, weakness, myalgia, etc.^[11,12]

Every pandemic leaves humankind some lessons to learn from and opens a new chapter of information for the medical profession. With Homoeopathy making a palpable presence in this changing medical scenario during the 2020 pandemic, I am sure the road ahead for Homoeopathy is becoming broader, with more opportunities opening for scientific explorations, and a wider acceptance of people at large.

Our last issue on COVID-19 has been widely appreciated and referred to. It talked primarily of the possibilities that Homoeopathy has to offer in COVID-19, thus acting as a source of guidance, paving the way for future work. We sincerely acknowledge the wide reads our special issue received.

IN THIS ISSUE

In this issue, several original research articles are presented to the profession. Iron-deficiency anaemia is quite prevalent in the Indian population, and it is observed that homoeopathic biochemic medicines are used frequently in practice with good results for this condition. Hence, the council's scientists attempted to study whether *Ferrum phosphoricum* or *Ferrum metallicum* could bring about a change in the haemoglobin levels in a statistically significant manner. The findings of this study are presented in this issue.^[13]

The findings of a randomised controlled trial are presented which attempted to examine the effect of pre-defined homoeopathic remedies as adjuvant versus placebo for the dermatological adverse effects of radiotherapy and vomiting after chemotherapy in breast carcinoma.^[14]

A study was conducted to see if a longer Likert scale would perform better in homoeopathic prognostic factor research.^[15] This study has been a continuation of the previous study^[16] which has concluded that with a 5-point Likert scale, few symptoms even in moderate intensity precipitated higher prevalence in the general population. Consequently, a need of longer Likert scales (more cut-off values), i.e., a 7-point Likert scale, was warranted.

The findings of another pilot study are presented, which was conducted at ten centres under the council, to study the response of homoeopathic medicines in cases of chronic cough by the method of prognostic factor research.^[17] Such evolving research methods aid in improving the homoeopathic method and its practical use.

Two case reports of evidence-based medicine are presented in this issue. One is the case of a patient suffering from nodular episcleritis who responded to the homoeopathic remedy prescribed on the basis of totality of symptoms and his condition resolved within a week.^[18] The second case report narrates how adjuvant homoeopathic treatment helped prevent tracheal stent implantation surgery, otherwise deemed necessary in case of post-intubation subglottic stenosis and improved the overall general state of the patient.^[19]

The significant research published in the first half of this year is summarised in the research updates section.^[20] A book review of the two volumes of the Standard Treatment Guidelines published by the council is also presented.^[21] These guidelines provide standardised guidance of diagnosis and therapeutic management of a diseased condition with Homoeopathy and are quite popular with the homoeopathic fraternity.

Here's wishing our readers good, holistic health!

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Received: 14.09.2020; Accepted: 14.09.2020; Published: 28.09.2020

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Website:

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DOI:

10.4103/ijrh.ijrh_92_20

How to cite this article: Khurana A. COVID-19: What lies ahead for Homoeopathy? *Indian J Res Homoeopathy* 2020;14:169-70.