

Homoeopathic medicine *Gettysburg water* in osteoarthritis: A case series

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Abstract

Introduction: Rheumatism alludes to various painful medical conditions which influence joints, bones, ligaments, tendons and muscles. It is also called musculoskeletal disease which is portrayed by pain and a gradual diminishing in the range of motion and function, in one or more areas of the musculoskeletal structure. In a few specific diseases, there are indications of inflammation, swelling, redness and warmth in the influenced zones like in osteoarthritis (OA), rheumatoid arthritis, etc. **Cases Summary:** Four cases of Osteoarthritis were treated with *Gettysburg water* (*Get.*) as a potentised homoeopathic medicine. Each case was followed up with clinical observation and reported according to the criteria of the HOM-CASE guidelines. Assessment of homoeopathic treatment and its effect was carried out using the visual analogue scale (VAS) during every visit. Improvement in all cases was evident from the reduction of pain in the affected joints and relief in other associated symptoms within 2–6 months of treatment. VAS scores for the cases ranged from 8 to 4 in all cases. Complaints associated with chronic OA were relieved by potentised *Get.* This case series has shown promising outcomes and a further high-quality clinical trial is needed for the establishment of effectiveness data for the said medicine.

Keywords: *Gettysburg water*, Homoeopathy, Osteoarthritis

INTRODUCTION

OA is a chronic degenerative disease, which progresses because of multifactorial causation presented by the loss of articular cartilage, hypertrophy of bone at the edges, subchondral bone sclerosis, and scope of biochemical and morphological alterations of the synovial membrane and joint capsule clinically. The condition is portrayed by joint pain, tenderness, limitation of movement, crepitus, and occasional effusion along with variable degrees of local inflammation.^[1,2] Although OA can involve any joint containing hyaline cartilage, troublesome symptoms most often occur in the weight-bearing joints of the lower extremities.

The prevalence of OA in India is 22–39% and it is the second most common rheumatic disease. It is observed that females were more affected than males.^[3,4] Old age is a trigger factor for OA.^[5,6] Among the OA patients, 80% have limitations in their movement and 25% have difficulty performing their daily activities.^[7]

OA can be classified into two types, primary and secondary. Former, with no definite causes, latter, is caused by other

conditions such as trauma, obesity or different/various diseases. Some modifiable and non-modifiable risk factors include age, gender, genetic and epigenetic predisposition, metabolic syndrome, endocrine, gender, occupation, sports, ethnicity, joint shape and dysplasia.^[8]

There are some homoeopathic medicines which are rarely used in our daily practice, but are very useful in some disease conditions. We should verify their usefulness through some well-designed studies. *Gettysburg water* (*Get.*) is one such medicine that is useful in alleviating OA joint pain.

Get. is difficult to prescribe because of the dearth of recorded clinical data. A few books only have narrated very few symptoms of this medicine. Personal experiences have of the authors shown that this medicine acts wonderfully on the pain, along with stiffness in cases of OA.

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Gettysburg water is found in the town of Gettysburg, which is situated in a miniature valley on the McClean farm, in the U.S. about 25 miles (40 km) West of York, Adams County, Pennsylvania.^[9] The spring water remaining in the Gettysburg Water Lake has many medicinal properties both as curative as well as preventive or sanitary purposes.^[10] The mineral springs have several outlets through the rocks.

Dr F. A. Genth, Consulting Chemist and Geologist, University of Pennsylvania mentioned, ‘the water-holding its salts firmly in solution undergoes no change either in taste or appearance or medicinal property. It has sulphate of baryta, sulphate of strontia, sulphate of lime, sulphate of magnesia, sulphate of potash, sulphate of soda, chloride of sodium, *chloride of lithia*, bicarbonate of soda, bicarbonate of magnesia, bicarbonate of lime, bicarbonate of iron, bicarbonate of manganese, bicarbonate of nickel, bicarbonate of cobalt, bicarbonate of copper, borate of magnesia, fluoride of calcium, alumina, silicic acid, organic matter and nitric acid’.^[11-13]

It has been reported that the Water of Gettysburg has produced curative and restorative effects in different forms as in stomach disorders that is, dyspepsia, heartburn, water brash, chronic diarrhoea, and many more conditions like acute neuralgic pains, torpid liver, gout, chronic rheumatism, nodosities of the joints, approaching and actual paralysis, diabetes, kidney disease, gravel and so forth.^[10]

In the homoeopathic literature, the symptoms of the said drug are rigidity of neck muscles and weakness of joints; patients unable to lift things along with rigid ligaments. It is also mentioned that it is useful in the sub-acute gouty state and chronic rheumatism. The sensation of rigidity becomes worse on movement, especially in the lumbar region and joints of hips, shoulders and wrists. The extent of stiffness and rigidity cannot be perceived when the patient is quiet. Complaints are generally aggravated in the morning. The patient cannot remain in one position for long. Stiffness of muscles is felt on moving, and pain in the ligaments is relieved by rest.^[14,15]

METHODS

This case series comprises of four patients with symptoms of chronic OA and arthralgia who attended the outpatient department at ‘Dr Anjali Chatterjee Regional Research Institute for Homoeopathy, Kolkata’.

All the cases were diagnosed as OA by diagnostic criteria of ICMR (specific proforma was filled by patients with help of a physician, Annexure-1).^[16] After framing the totality, well known homoeopathic medicines were prescribed, which were matched with the homoeopathic similimum, but they did not respond up to the mark. Then, depending on the symptom totality modalities (*worse movement*) and pathological symptoms, *Get.* was prescribed. Based on the knowledge of homoeopathic materia medica, medicine was prescribed in 200C potencies in suitable doses (Here, fractional doses were used, 2 drops of *Get.* mixed in 30 ml of distilled water and

advised to be taken 5 drops at a time). Subsequently, follow-ups were done in all cases until improvement occurred. The cases are reported according to the criteria set out in the HOM-CASE guidelines:^[17]

The improvement in all cases was evident from the reduction of pain of OA with other associated symptoms within a 2–6-month period of treatment. The pain score was assessed using the visual analogue scale (VAS) during every visit. The score declined from 8 to 4 almost for all cases and it showed a positive outcome of homoeopathic treatment in the cases of OA. No related confounders like yoga, physiotherapy etc were being practiced by any of the following patients.

CASE REPORTS

Case 1

A 69-year-old male was suffering from pain in the knee and ankle joint, with marked swelling, for the past 6 years, aggravated by the first movement and work. There was a crackling sound in the neck, with mild pain, when rising from a sitting position and when trying to move the neck up and down. The complaint was aggravated in sunny weather and ameliorated in cloudy weather. His thirst was increased and his tongue trembled on stretching out.

On examination, knees produced a crackling sound on passive movement. Depending on the clinical symptoms and physical examination, the case was diagnosed as OA.

Medical history

The patient had a history of myocardial infarction at the age of 29 years and cataract surgery.

Medical history and follow-up from 31 January 2018 to 02 April 2018, revealed that the patient was treated with *Osteoarthritis-nosode* 200, but there was no relief in pain in the knee joint. Depending on the modalities and pathological symptoms and on the knowledge of homoeopathic materia medica, *Get.* was prescribed in 200C potency [Table 1].

Case 2

A 68-year-old male patient was suffering from pain in both the knee joints and lower pelvic area for the past 8–10 years. His pain was aggravated by movement and ameliorated by rest and warm application. There was a cystic growth over his head, leading to anxiety. The stool was not clear, with ineffectual urging. His appetite was moderate and he desired hot food and vegetables. He was averse to meat and his stool was mucoïd and unsatisfactory. His thirst was increased than before, and his tongue was clean and moist. Other physical generals included scanty sweat, good sleep and sensitivity to cold (chilly). His history revealed that he was hypertensive and had once suffered from mucous dysentery.

On examination, a crackling sound in the knee joint was heard. The case was diagnosed as OA of the knee joint, especially depending on clinical symptoms and physical examination.

Table 1: Follow-up of cases

Case No.	Case-1	Case-2	Case-3	Case-4
Baseline	Date: 14 June 2018 VAS: 8 <i>Get.</i> 200/7 doses, O.D×7 days	Date: 24 May 2018 VAS: 8 <i>Get.</i> 200/15 Doses, O.D×15 Days	Date: 09 September 2019 VAS: 8 <i>Get.</i> 200/30 doses, B.D. × 15 Days	Date: 11 November 2019 VAS: 7 <i>Get.</i> 200/40 doses, B.D. × 20 DAYS
First Follow-up with Outcome	Date: 26 July 2018 Pain reduced but persisting VAS: 6 <i>Get.</i> 200/15 doses, Alternate day (A.D) × 15 days	Date: 13 September 2018 VAS: 8 same as before <i>Get.</i> 200/15 doses. O.D×15 Days	Date: 23 September 2019 VAS: 5 Pain reduced but persisting <i>Get.</i> 200/21 doses, O.D×21 Days	Date: 9 December 2019 VAS: 5 pain reduced but persisting <i>Get.</i> 200/40 doses, B.D×20 Days
Second Follow-up with Outcome	Date: 03 September 2018 VAS: 6 Pain better but no further relief. <i>Get.</i> 200/15 doses, AD×15 days	Date: 27 September 2018 VAS: 6 Pain reduce but persisting <i>Get.</i> 200/30 doses, B.D×15 Days	Date: 10 October 2019 VAS: 4 Pain slightly better but persisting <i>Get.</i> 200/21 doses×O.D×21 Days	Date: 23 December 2019 VAS: 3 Pain decreased. Acute cough, <i>Rumex crispus</i> 30/10 doses, B.D×5 Days
Third Follow-up with Outcome	Date: 04 October 2018 VAS: 4 Pain better but persisting <i>Get.</i> 200/15 doses, O. D	Date: 11 October 2018 VAS: 4 Pain better but persisting <i>Get.</i> 200/20 doses, O.D×20 Days	Date: 17 January 2020 VAS: 6 In the meantime, the patient was better and was on placebo, later his symptoms returned. <i>Get.</i> 200/15doses, O.D×15 Days	Date: 20 January 2020 VAS: 3 Standstill condition <i>Get.</i> 200/7 doses, 7 Days×O. D
Fourth Follow-up with Outcome	Date: 04 April 2019 VAS: 6 The pain increased <i>Get.</i> 200/15 doses. A.D×15 Days	----	Date: 12 March 2020 VAS: 3 Patient Better but pain persisting. <i>Get.</i> 200/15doses, O.D×15 Days	Date: 10 February 2020 VAS: 3 <i>Get.</i> 200/14 doses, B.D X 7 Days
Fifth Follow-up with Outcome	Date: 23 September 2019 VAS: 4 Difficulty in both knees during motion, work, tenderness <i>Get.</i> 200/7 doses. A.D×7 Days	----	Date: 08 June 2020 VAS: 3 Patient Better but pain persisting <i>Get.</i> 200/21 doses, O.D×21 days	----

Medical history

He was treated with *Bryonia alba* 30, 200, followed by *Causticum* 30 but there was no relief from pain in the knee joint. Then, depending on the modalities and pathological symptoms and on the knowledge of homoeopathic materia medica, *Get.* was prescribed in 200C potency [Table 1].

Case 3

A 45-year-old male patient complained of pain in the left knee joint, with a feeling of dislocation and a history of carrying heavy weight. The pain was aggravated by motion but ameliorated by rest. There was a feeling of stiffness in the back. The patient was thermally hot and had a moderate appetite. He was a vegetarian, desired sweets and had a moderate thirst. He had dog bite in the past. Family history was insignificant.

On examination, there was swelling of the knee joint and his case was diagnosed as OA, depending on the clinical symptoms and physical examination.

Medical history

Rhus tox. 200, followed by *Rhus tox.* 1M and then *Cal. flour* 6X, did not relieve the patient from pain in the knee joint. Depending on the modalities and pathological symptoms and

with the knowledge of homoeopathic materia medica, *Get.* was prescribed in 200 C potency [Table 1].

Case 4

A 72-year-old male patient was suffering from pain in the knee joint and lower pelvis, which was aggravated by movement. On examination, a Baker's cyst in the left leg was felt. His history revealed repeated surgical intervention in the spine and benign hypertrophy of the prostate gland. The patient was on anti-hypertensive medicines.

Among physical generals, the patient had a moderate appetite and thirst, desired vegetables, fish and meat; had a moist, coated tongue and unsatisfactory, constipated stool. His sweat was scanty and sleep diminished. There was no thermal inclination towards hot or cold.

On examination, swelling of the knee joint was observed, which was diagnosed as OA, depending on clinical symptoms and physical examination.

Medical history

Bryonia alba in 30 and then 200 potencies were prescribed with no relief from pain in the knee joint. Then, depending on the modalities and pathological symptoms and the knowledge

of homoeopathic materia medica, *Get. was* prescribed in 200C potency [Table 1].

DISCUSSION

OA predominantly affects older people and often coexists with other medical conditions associated with ageing and being overweight, such as cerebrovascular diseases, diabetes mellitus poor vision and other psychological problems such as anxiety, depression and social isolation among older people.^[18] OA is a degenerative disease, which is very challenging to cure completely by any medical system. Lifestyle changes, exercise and pain management may, however, give some relief.

Although there is a dearth of available literature regarding this medicine *Get.*, its symptoms were very marked in the patients, like the amelioration by absolute rest, and aggravation by motion, which is mentioned in the literature as ‘pain not perceived when quiet’^[15] and ‘worse from moving’^[14,15] which is also similar to *Bryonia alba*. But as seen in the cases where *Bryonia* was prescribed, it could not produce the desired result. ‘Rigidity’^[15] and ‘stiffness’^[15] are marked symptoms of *Get.*, which were also present in most of the cases.

With this case series, we want to showcase the efficacy of *Get.* in providing some relief or alleviating symptoms of the patient, without any side effects. Studies have shown a positive role of homoeopathic medicine in treating and improving the quality of life.^[19] In a study where 100 patients were selected out of 2300, it was found that six common medicines which are used daily in our practice were effective in treating OA of the knee.^[20] A systematic review of homoeopathic remedies in the treatment of OA mentions positive evidence for the effectiveness of combination preparations for the treatment of patients with OA. However, a small number of trials performed to date precludes a firm conclusion.^[21] Some documents show doubt about the reproducibility of homoeopathy in rheumatic diseases, double-blind, randomised and controlled pilot study of OA with homoeopathy did not appear superior to placebo and suggested larger multicentric, randomised and controlled trials.^[22]

Get. is not used frequently by homoeopathic practitioners. We have used only a few indications of the medicine, which are very relevant to the disease condition. Using this medicine, we got excellent results in OA complaints, including better quality of life in a painless way and no adverse events from the multiple fractional doses of the medicine.

Since this medicine is neither well-proven nor widely known, this case series may sensitise the physicians to use it in their day-to-day practice. Moreover, we could find very little literature,^[13,14] and only one case series that mentioned this particular medicine.^[23]

CONCLUSION

The present case series has shown us the usefulness of *Gettysburg water* in OA. However, higher quality studies are

required to establish the causal relationship between OA and its treatment with *Get.*

Declaration of patient consent

The authors certify that they have obtained all necessary consents related to the patients regarding the images and other information related to the cases for reporting in the journal.

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Conflicts of interest

None declared.

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Titre: Médicament homéopathique Gettysburg Water dans l'arthrose : Une série de cas

Résumé : Introduction: Le rhumatisme fait référence à diverses affections douloureuses qui affectent les articulations, les os, les ligaments, les tendons et les muscles. Il s'agit également d'une maladie de l'appareil locomoteur qui se manifeste par des douleurs et une diminution progressive de l'amplitude des mouvements (ROM) et de la fonction, dans une ou plusieurs zones de la structure musculo-squelettique. Dans certaines maladies spécifiques, il existe des signes d'inflammation, de gonflement, de rougeur et de chaleur dans les zones touchées, comme dans l'arthrose, la polyarthrite rhumatoïde, l'arthrite et d'autres types de spondylose. **Cases Summary:** Quatre cas d'ostéo-arthrite ont été traités avec l'eau de Gettysburg (Get.) comme médicament homéopathique potentialisé. Chaque cas a fait l'objet d'une observation clinique et a été rapporté selon les critères des directives HOM-CASE. L'évaluation du traitement homéopathique et de son effet a été effectuée à l'aide de l'échelle visuelle analogique (EVA) lors de chaque visite. Dans tous les cas, l'amélioration était évidente grâce à la réduction de la douleur dans les articulations touchées et au soulagement des autres symptômes associés dans les 2 à 6 mois suivant le traitement. Les scores sur l'EVA étaient compris entre 8 et 4 dans tous les cas. Les plaintes associées à l'arthrose chronique ont été soulagées par le Get potentialisé. Cette série de cas a montré des résultats prometteurs et un autre essai clinique de haute qualité est nécessaire pour établir les données d'efficacité dudit médicament.

Titel: Homöopathische Medizin Gettysburg-Wasser bei Osteoarthritis: Eine Fallserie

Zusammenfassung: Einleitung: Unter Rheuma versteht man verschiedene schmerzhaftes Erkrankungen, die Gelenke, Knochen, Bänder, Sehnen und Muskeln betreffen. Sie wird auch als Muskel-Skelett-Erkrankung bezeichnet, die sich durch Schmerzen und eine allmähliche Verringerung des Bewegungsumfanges (ROM) und der Funktion in einem oder mehreren Bereichen der Muskel-Skelett-Struktur äußert. Bei einigen spezifischen Erkrankungen gibt es Anzeichen für Entzündungen, Schwellungen, Rötungen und Wärme in den betroffenen Bereichen, wie z. B. bei Osteoarthritis (OA), rheumatoider Arthritis (RA), Arthritis und anderen verschiedenen Arten von Spondylose. **Zusammenfassung des Falls:** Vier Fälle von Osteoarthritis wurden mit Gettysburg-Wasser (Get.) als potenziertem homöopathischem Arzneimittel behandelt. Jeder Fall wurde klinisch beobachtet und nach den Kriterien der HOM-CASE-Leitlinien dokumentiert. Die Bewertung der homöopathischen Behandlung und ihrer Wirkung erfolgte bei jedem Besuch anhand der visuellen Analogskala (VAS). In allen Fällen zeigte sich eine Verbesserung durch eine Verringerung der Schmerzen in den betroffenen Gelenken und eine Linderung der anderen damit verbundenen Symptome innerhalb von 2 bis 6 Monaten nach der Behandlung. Die VAS-Scores für die Fälle lagen in allen Fällen zwischen 8 und 4. Die mit chronischer Osteoarthritis verbundenen Beschwerden wurden durch potenziertes Get gelindert. Diese Fallserie hat vielversprechende Ergebnisse gezeigt, und eine weitere hochwertige klinische Studie ist erforderlich, um Daten zur Wirksamkeit des genannten Arzneimittels zu ermitteln.

शीर्षक: अस्थिसंधिशोथ में होम्योपैथिक औषधि गेटिसबर्ग वाटर: विषय श्रृंखला

सार: परिचय: गठिया विभिन्न दर्दनाक चिकित्सा स्थितियों को इंगित करता है जो जोड़ों, हड्डियों, स्नायुबंधन, कण्डरा और मांसपेशियों को प्रभावित करते हैं। इसे पेशिककाली रोग भी कहा जाता है जिसे पेशिककाली संरचना के एक या अधिक क्षेत्रों में दर्द और गति के क्षेत्र (आरओएम) और कार्य की सीमा में धीरे-धीरे कमी आने से व्यक्त किया जाता है। कुछ विशिष्ट बीमारियों में, अस्थिसंधिशोथ (ओए), रूमेटाइड गठिया (आरए), गठिया और अन्य विभिन्न प्रकार के अपकेशरूता जैसे प्रभावित क्षेत्रों में जलन, सूजन, लालिमा और गर्मी के संकेत होते हैं। **विषय सारांश:** अस्थिसंधिशोथ के चार मामलों को गेटिसबर्ग वाटर (गेटिसबर्ग), एक होम्योपैथिक दवा, के साथ इलाज किया गया था। प्रत्येक विषय को नैदानिक अवलोकन के साथ पालन किया गया था और होम-केस दिशानिर्देशों के मानदंडों के अनुसार रिपोर्ट किया गया था। होम्योपैथिक उपचार और इसके प्रभाव का आकलन प्रत्येक दौरा के दौरान दृश्य एनालॉग पैमाने (वीएस) का उपयोग करके किया गया था। सभी मामलों में सुधार प्रभावित जोड़ों में दर्द की कमी से स्पष्ट था, और उपचार के 2 से 6 महीनों के भीतर अन्य संबंधित लक्षणों में राहत आई। विषय के लिए वीएस स्कोर सभी मामलों में 8 से 4 तक थे। दीर्घकालिक अस्थिसंधिशोथ से जुड़ी शिकायतों को अधिक प्रभावकारी जेट द्वारा राहत दी गई थी। इस विषय श्रृंखला ने आशाजनक परिणाम दिखाए हैं और उक्त दवा के लिए प्रभावशीलता डेटा की स्थापना के लिए एक और उच्च गुणवत्ता वाले नैदानिक परीक्षण की आवश्यकता है।

Title: Medicina Homeopática Gettysburg Agua en Osteoartritis: Una serie de casos

Resumen: Introducción: El reumatismo alude a varias condiciones médicas dolorosas que influyen en las articulaciones, huesos, ligamentos, tendones y músculos. También se llama enfermedad musculoesquelética que se presenta por dolor y una disminución gradual en el rango de movimiento (ROM) y la función, en una o más áreas de la estructura musculoesquelética. En algunas enfermedades específicas, hay indicaciones de inflamación, hinchazón, enrojecimiento y calor en las zonas influenciadas como la osteoartritis (OA), la artritis reumatoide (AR), la artritis y otros tipos diferentes de espondilosis.

Resumen de los casos: Cuatro casos de osteoartritis fueron tratados con agua de Gettysburg (Get.) como medicina homeopática potenciada. Cada caso fue seguido con observación clínica y reportado de acuerdo con los criterios de las guías DE CASOS de HOM. La evaluación del tratamiento homeopático y su efecto se realizó utilizando la escala analógica visual (VAS) durante cada visita. La mejoría en todos los casos fue evidente por la reducción del dolor en las articulaciones afectadas, y el alivio en otros síntomas asociados dentro de los 2 a 6 meses del tratamiento. Los resultados DE LOS CASOS VARIARON de 8 a 4 EN todos los casos. Las quejas asociadas con la osteoartritis crónica fueron aliviadas por el Get potenciado. Esta serie de casos ha mostrado resultados prometedores y se necesita un ensayo clínico de alta calidad adicional para el establecimiento de datos de efectividad para dicho medicamento.

标题：顺势疗法药物葛底斯堡水治疗骨关节炎：一个病例系列

摘要：引言：风湿病指的是影响关节、骨骼、韧带、肌腱和肌肉的各种痛苦的医疗状况。它也被称为肌肉骨骼疾病，其表现为肌肉骨骼结构的一个或多个区域的疼痛和运动范围（ROM）和功能逐渐减少。在一些特定的疾病中，有炎症，肿胀，发红和温暖的影响区域的迹象，如骨关节炎（OA），类风湿性关节炎（RA），关节炎和其他不同类型的脊椎病。个案摘要：用葛底斯堡水（得到。）作为一种增强的顺势疗法药物。每个病例进行临床观察随访，并根据病例指南的标准进行报告。在每次访问期间使用视觉模拟量表（VAS）评估顺势疗法治疗及其效果。所有病例的改善都是明显的，因为受影响关节的疼痛减轻，其他相关症状在治疗后2至6个月内得到缓解。所有病例的VAS评分从8到4不等。与慢性骨关节炎相关的投诉通过电位得到得到缓解。该系列病例显示出有希望的结果，需要进一步进行高质量的临床试验，以建立上述药物的有效性数据。