

HOMEOPATHY FOR CANCER

Dr Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician, discovered the medical science of Homeopathy 200 years ago, in late 18th century. The World Health organization has recognized Homeopathy as a traditional system of medicine. W.H.O. has recommended its integration with conventional medicine for meeting the global needs for effective, safe and inexpensive health care by the year 2000!

Dr. Hahnemann experimented with himself and found that when he took daily doses of Cinchona Bark (a South American herbal medicine used for marsh fever), he developed symptoms like marsh fever. As soon as he stopped taking Cinchona, his symptoms subsided. He theorized that if large doses of a substance produced certain set of symptoms in healthy individuals, the same substance, in much diluted dose could cure the same symptoms in a diseased individual. He conducted such PROVINGS on himself and on many other healthy individuals. His experiments repeatedly confirmed his theory, which he called the Law of Similar. “ Similia Similibis Curenter”, which means Similar Cures Similar. Homeopathy means “Similar path or similar to disease pathology”. Onions (allium cepa) cause watering and burning of eyes, therefore homeopathic allium cepa can cure eye inflammation, which presents with watering and burning as main symptoms. This concept is opposite of allopathy (allo= different, pathy=path), which in this case might use decongestants, antibiotics and steroids, medicines counteracting the symptoms. In a short span of few decades, hundreds of natural substances were thus proven and clinically tested. This led to the development of voluminous Homeopathic Materia Medica and Repertories, which form the basic references for the practice of Homeopathy.

Currently, an estimated 500 million people use homeopathic remedies annually worldwide for their health care. In Britain, homeopathic hospitals and clinics are part of their National Health System. Homeopathy is widely practiced all over Europe, especially in Germany and France. In India, there are about 25000 trained and licensed homeopathic practitioners helping millions of patients annually. Homeopathy was quite prevalent in USA in 19th century and early 20th century. With advent of pharmaceutical industry, homeopathy was thrown in the background. Philadelphia

and Pittsburgh used to be important centers for development and practice of homeopathy till early 20th century. I was told that the Shady Side Hospital of Pittsburgh University was known as Hahnemann Homeopathic Hospital in the early part of this century.

How Does It Work?

There have been many controversies about how homeopathic remedies work. The homeopathic law states that “ The more a remedy is diluted, the greater it’s potency” This law apparently sounds ridiculous. In highly diluted form of a remedy above 12 - C potency, as per the Avagadro’s Hypotheses, atoms of original substance cannot be detected. How can such a small or non-existent quantity of a substance produce any effects? Experiences of thousands of practitioners and millions of patients, however, vouch for the effectiveness and safety of homeopathy. If it were all due to PLACEBO EFFECT, as some of us would like to think, it would not work in infants or animals. Homeopathy is used effectively in infants and even in veterinary practice. This fact would put the question about placebo effect to the rest.

To understand how it may be working, we have to take support of quantum physics and theories developed by Albert Einstein. Mass and energy are interconvertible and there are many sub-atomic particles already known and many more remain to be discovered. Atom is no longer the smallest unit of matter. At sub-atomic level, a substance can and does leave its specific Vibratory Energy Signature in the carrier. This subtle vibratory energy can resonate with subatomic energy disturbances in the body, which may be the cause of the disease. It is therefore quite possible that these remedies are able to correct the subtle disease process and lead to effective cure of the physical disease process. Physics of Einstein has posed new challenges to old Newtonian theories, which stated that matter and energy are separate and cannot be inter-converted. As per Newtonian physics, atom was indivisible, a concept which has radically changed with advent of atomic physics in last century.

A recent study using nuclear magnetic resonance, M.R Scan Technology, demonstrated distinctive readings of sub-atomic activities in various highly diluted homeopathic remedies. These readings were absent in placebo. There are possibly specific electro-magnetic radiations emanating from homeopathic remedies, which may be counter-acting the subtle disturbances in

the body. Some workers have theorized that homeopathic remedies create immune response and thus help the body cure itself. Anyway, as they say “ the proof of pudding is in eating”!

Homeopathic treatment is directed towards the individual and NOT towards the any particular disease label. The same disease might require different remedies in different individuals, while one single remedy might also work for different diseases depending upon the constitution of the patients. According to homeopathy, “ A disease is specific to the individual.” This is holistic medical approach. Many times, if a proper remedy is chosen for a patient, it is seen that various layers of diseases, suffered by that person in the past, gradually unfold, come to surface and eventually get out of the system. Many a times, one single dose of a properly selected remedy can work wonders over a period of time. This way deeper disturbances are also taken care of effectively with homeopathy. This is known as Hering’s Laws of Cure.

During my work at Jaslok Hospital in Bombay in 1970s, a surgical colleague Dr. B. P. Gandhi, FRCS, introduced me to homeopathy. While discussing some cases, Dr. Gandhi suggested names of some homeopathic remedies for pain control. The remedies were given to the patients, some of who showed dramatic pain relief over the next few days. We then tried some other remedies on more patients. I realized that homeopathic remedies are prescribed according to the constitution of a patient and not as per the disease. This medical science requires extensive study, deep understanding of the patient and peculiarity of his symptoms. I attended a special course in a local homeopathic medical college in Bombay to learn more about homeopathy.

In late 1980s and early 1990s, Dr. Lara Shah, a young homeopathic physician, helped us to conduct clinical trials on patients undergoing radiation treatments at Bombay Hospital. Dr. Shah used to assess a patient homeopathically and suggest some complementary homeopathic remedies. This combination apparently helped a large number of patients who seemed to be enthusiastic about this approach.

Homeopathy for Radiation Reactions:

We wanted to study if some of the homeopathic remedies were effective to reduce the radiation reactions and side effects. A patient under radiotherapy commonly develops loss of appetite, loss of energy, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, diarrhea, pain while passing urine and stools.

The reactions are variable and depend upon the part of the body under radiation treatment. We developed a protocol for a double blind clinical trial to compare the efficacy of two homeopathic remedies, Cobaltum and Causticum, against a placebo. In this trial, 82 patients undergoing radiotherapy were randomly divided in three groups. One group received placebo- dummy pills without any medicine. Second group was given causticum 30 and the third group cobaltum 30.

Causticum was selected because of its' actions on sadness, feeling of hopelessness, irritation, burning sensation, fatigue, rough sensations on mucous membranes and inflammation. Cobaltum was selected for its' actions on fatigue, pains, mood changes, abdominal pains, backache and mainly because of the fact that these patients were under cobalt radiation treatments.

Neither the doctors nor the individual patients knew which group a particular patient belonged. This was a double blind trial to do away with individual prejudices to prevent wrong conclusions. Each week, all the patients were checked up to see the progress and to record the level of radiation reactions. The trial went on for about 6 months. At the end, records were analyzed and conclusions drawn. These conclusions are given in following table. Compared to the placebo group whose reaction index was assigned as 100, cobaltum group had index of 55 and causticum group 63. This suggests a significant reduction in the severity of radiation reactions due to these two remedies in patients under radiation treatments.

Table Showing Severity of Radiation Reactions in the Three Groups: A, B and C.

Group	Remedy used	Number of Patients	Reaction Index	Reaction Level Reduction
A	Placebo	28	100	Baseline, N.A.
B	Cobaltum 30 C	26	55	45%
C	Causticum 30 C	28	63	37%

We did not observe any decrease in the effect off radiation treatment due to homeopathic

supplements. In other words, homeopathic supplements neither interfered with action of radiotherapy nor enhanced radiation effect for better tumor regression. Following this trial, Cobaltum and Causticum were given to the patients routinely with their consent.

Homeopathy for Cancer:

Many papers and articles have been published about the possible use of homeopathy for cancer treatment. Various claims have been made. With my limited personal exposure to homeopathy, I cannot comment on the role of homeopathy in cure of cancer. However, I have observed homeopathy helping a great deal in many common acute and chronic medical diseases. In cancer, homeopathy can help for relief of symptoms although it may not directly act against the tumor process. Wrongly used, it can even stimulate tumor growth due to its' "Similar Cures Similar" philosophy. It is best to consult an experienced homeopathic physician before you consider any homeopathy for symptomatic relief or for long-term constitutional treatment to improve your immunity.

In the management of cancer, homeopathy can be used as a supportive treatment for give good relief from (1) Symptoms of cancer such as pain, restlessness, loss of sleep, fatigue, weakness, loss of appetite etc., (2) Symptoms of side reactions of cancer treatments such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, pain in abdomen, burning in urine, vertigo, weakness, etc and (3) for treatment of any other diseases unrelated to cancer or its' treatment.

Following is a list of some remedies we have found useful as a supplementary treatment. These are general observation. These can be used either in decimal 6X to 12X or centesimal 12 C to 200 C potency range. You should consult a homeopathic doctor before taking these remedies.

1. CONIUM: in 30 or 200 C potency can be given daily for 7 days initially with the beginning of radiation treatments. Keynotes: ailments in old age, hard tumors and glands, any swelling related to old injury, breast lumps and for cancer tendency.
2. PHOSPHORUS: in low potency 12 C or even 12X, can follow conium from second week of the treatment till the end of radiation course. Prevents weakness and exhaustion. Keynotes: burning spots, feeling of intense heat, great weakness and prostration, weariness, nausea, diarrhea, bleeding etc.

3. CAUSTICUM: Sometimes given in place of Phosphorus, when painful inflammation of mouth and throat is present with raw sensation due to radiation reaction.
4. IPECAC: Effective for nausea and vomiting related to radiotherapy and chemotherapy treatments. May be given 30 minutes prior to the treatment and repeated when required. Can be taken 30 minutes before meals to improve the appetite and reduce sensation of nausea to food.
5. PODOPHYLLUM: Given to control diarrhea resulting from radiation treatments to pelvis for lower abdominal cancers. If the diarrhea is not controlled, it might be advisable to give a gap of one or two weeks in the course of radiotherapy.
6. CANTHARIS: For severe burning in mouth, vagina, urethra and anal canal, cantharis liquid can be applied locally and also given orally. It is quite effective in temporarily relieving local burning pains.
7. CARCINOSIN: May be given as a single dose as a nosode before conventional treatment starts.
8. RADIUM BROMIDE 200-C: May be given to minimize the radiation reaction, daily for a few days.

There are many other homeopathic remedies, which can help under specific situations. You should undertake supplemental homeopathic treatments under a qualified homeopathic physician. WE have found that homeopathic remedies can be given simultaneously with other allopathic medicines without any adverse effects.

Classical homeopathy as developed by Samuel Hahnemann uses single remedies, which perfectly match the whole picture of the disease in a particular patient. The doctor observes patient's reaction over weeks and even months before a second prescription is given. This is a time consuming process but may produce good results at the hands of a good practitioner.

Combination Homeopathy:

Another current trend is to combine many different remedies in low potencies and administer the

mixture to a patient on daily basis. Combinations produce quicker results in a variety of common conditions and may not require deeper case study of a patient. Many standard combinations for various common conditions are available in homeopathic medical stores. The components simultaneously work on a wide range of symptoms and organ systems. As far as I know, there is no specific combination for cancer, which is a difficult disease to treat. Many senior classical homeopathic doctors do not encourage combination homeopathy.

In Europe and USA, many homeopathic companies produce combination remedies for various purposes. Drainage remedies are low potency combinations that stimulate liver, intestines, kidneys, skin etc to improve their function. Detoxification remedies use medium potency combinations to dislodge the toxins from various tissues in body and bring these to be drained through the organs mentioned above. I have used some of these combinations during my work in USA and found these helpful to improve drainage, detoxification and immunity.

Although not a part of classical homeopathy, there are many other methods of using subtle extracts from various flowers, salts and plants. Bach flower remedies, Biochemic Remedies, Tissue Salts, Aromatherapy etc are some of these methods. A plethora of information is available on these methods in book form as well as on the Internet.

In conclusion, I can say that homeopathy is an effective, safe and gentle complementary method for improving quality of life of cancer patients. It can help a person for symptomatic relief. It should not be used as the only method to deal with cancer. Under guidance of a homeopathic physician, homeopathic remedies can be used simultaneously with other treatment methods.