

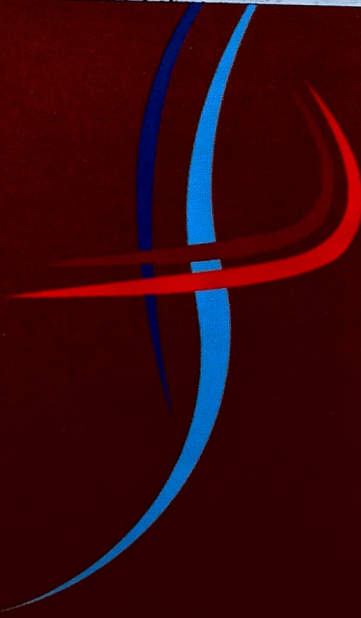
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CONTENTS

Editorial	4
An Epidemic of Pain in India with light of Homoeopathy	5
Liaison of Migraine and Body Mass Index	15
Homoeopathic Management of Diaper Rash	20
Long Standing Pediatric Constipation Treated With Minimal Sweet Pills In Short Duration	23
Crossword	29

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An Epidemic of Pain in India with light of Homoeopathy

"Death does not scare me; this unbearable pain does. I just pull my hair apart and wish I could die,"

Dr. Vaidehi Bhatt

Assistant Professor, Department of Homoeopathic Pharmacy, Rajkot Homoeopathic Medical College, Parul University.

Abstract

Homeopathy is often overlooked as a modality for pain management. However, it deserves to be a first-line treatment due to its safety, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness. Limitations to the acceptance of homeopathy in the India include physicians' lack of familiarity with the research studies. Finally, resistance to the use of homeopathy—based on the mistaken notion that it contains nothing but water—is addressed by citations from the newly emerging field of ultrahigh dilution physics. A description of the most common homeopathic medicines for various types of pain is provided, including back pain, dental pain, labor pains, and trigeminal neuralgia. Homeopathic medicines must be customized to the individual patient in chronic conditions. Yet, a severe acute trauma can respond to the same homeopathic medicine in nearly all individuals. As an example, a standard protocol is provided to speed healing and reduce pain after surgery or dental extraction. While homeopathic medicines are rarely tested against conventional painkillers in a head-to-head trial, certain research studies show that homeopathic medicines can enhance healing for those already on conventional medications and can reduce pain in a condition such as a fracture for which effective drug treatment is lacking.

Keywords: Homoeopathy, effectiveness, ultrahigh dilution physics, conventional medications

Introduction

Pain, as defined by the International Association for the Study of Pain (IASP) is "an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with actual or potential tissue damage, or described in terms of such damage".

Pain management has been called "the leading edge" of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) modalities for integration into conventional healthcare in the India. A survey conducted by the Indian Society for Study of Pain (ISSP) found that 23% of the country's population today suffers from chronic pain. This may be the tip of the iceberg and the actual number may be much higher. New pain-management guidelines from The Indian Society for Study of Pain (ISSP) a wide range of CAM modalities instead of opioids for chronic low back pain—but the recommended CAM modalities do not include homeopathy. In contrast, the American Pain Management Association's textbook, Weiner's Pain Management, has a detailed chapter on homeopathic treatment of pain syndromes.

Regardless of age, sex, and region, pain is a significant health issue worldwide. Everybody suffers from some type of pain during life time. Understanding pain as a disease, better diagnosis, and treatment may help to reduce overall health burden associated with pain. Currently, numerous non pharmacological and pharmacological treatment options are available

for the management of pain. The major pharmacological options include paracetamol, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), and opioids. In many cases, combination of analgesics is required for effective pain relief. Unfortunately, no single agent is an ideal choice for all types of patients or no one agent is suitable for all types of pain ; hence physician has to choose the best suitable agent from the available options based on different factors including patient dynamics, medicine related factors, and disease related aspects. Patient satisfaction also plays an important role in ensuring compliance with the treatment, especially during long term treatment. Understanding physician's perspective while selecting an analgesic and significant barriers in effective pain management through a systematic approach and addressing them with appropriate measures could help for better outcomes.

Further, there is some evidence to suggest that homeopathy can work faster than conventional pain medications or reduce the need for them, without danger of dependence or withdrawal symptoms. There is also research to suggest that homeopathy can work better than placebo in reducing pain, for example from endometriosis, joint pain and stiffness, and haemorrhoids. For those in the throes of withdrawal, homeopathic medicines can minimize suffering and help to ensure a successful rehabilitation outcome.

Pain affects the psychological, cognitive, social, and spiritual domains of patients' lives; in turn, the experience of pain can be influenced by emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual factors. The burden of pain is manifested not only through suffering, but also through impaired function, decreased activity, and alterations in one's sense of identity and social role. Uncontrolled or poorly relieved cancer pain has a profoundly negative impact on the patient's quality of life and can even trigger hopelessness, despair, and a desire for a hastened death. Family caregivers who witness a loved one's suffering with uncontrolled pain may experience helplessness and an overwhelming caregiver burden.

Types of pain

Type	Pathophysiology	Characteristics	Examples
Based on underlying pathophysiology			
Nociceptive pain	Activation of nociceptors in response to noxious stimuli	Sharp, burning pain (somatic) or dull, aching pain (visceral)	Back pain, headaches, neck pain, shoulder pain, pain due to burns and injuries
Neuropathic pain	Central sensitization or neuronal damage	Severe, burning, shooting or numbing pain, increased sensitivity to stimuli (hyperalgesia and allodynia)	Peripheral neuropathy, diabetic neuropathy, trigeminal neuralgia, complex regional pain syndrome (CRPS), neuropathic pain due to spinal injury
Mixed pain	Nociceptive and neuropathic origin	Severe, shooting pain or dull, aching pain or pain with	LBP with radiculopathy, cancer pain

		mixed characteristics	
Based on duration			
Acute pain	Activation of peripheral nociceptors, accompanied by release of COX enzymes and prostaglandins	Lasts from few seconds to less than 6 months	Injuries, headaches, sprains, postoperative pain, back pain
Chronic pain	Sensitization at the level of spinal neurons via multiple mechanisms	Lasts for ≥6 months	Chronic primary pain, cancer pain, posttraumatic and postsurgical pain, neuropathic pain, headache and orofacial pain, visceral pain, musculoskeletal pain
Breakthrough pain	Pain in a well-treated patient due to movement (incidental), spontaneous or resulting from weaning off of drugs or effect of drug	Lasts from few seconds to hours	Cancer pain
Based on aetiology			
Cancer pain	Caused due to cancer itself (brain tumours, breast cancer), drug treatment (chemotherapy, radiation) or associated disease (neuropathy)	Acute or chronic pain of mild, moderate or severe intensity with/without breakthrough pain	All types of cancers
CNCP	May have multiple aetiologies	Moderate-to-severe pain with/without restricted mobility	Rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis
Based on location			
LBP	Caused due to bad posture, strains/sprains, underlying disease (malignancy or infection) or referred pain (kidney or gall stones)	Mild and moderate-to-severe pain with/without impaired movement or physical function	Acute LBP, herniated disk, spondylosis
Neck pain and shoulder pain	Caused due to strains, sprains, incorrect posture and	Mild and moderate-to-severe pain with/without	Axial neck pain, cervical radiculopathy

	compression of spinal cord or injuries	impaired movement or physical function	
Headaches	Caused due to incorrect posture, stress, migraine or underlying disease (tumours)	Headache associated with migraine may present additional symptoms (aura), visual problems or vertigo	Tension-type headaches, migraine headaches
Referred pain	Type of visceral pain that radiates to surrounding regions	May be sharp, pulsating pain or dull, aching pain depending upon the origin	Angina (jaws and shoulders), stones (abdomen and back)

Pathophysiology of pain

Regardless of its categorization, pain cannot be distinctly attributed to any isolated pathological event. Pain experience is a complex process that involves the activation of multiple neuronal signalling pathways within the peripheral nervous system (PNS) and central nervous system (CNS).

The subjective experience of pain may be summarized as a four-stage process - transduction, transmission, modulation and perception.

Stage 1 (transduction), nociceptive stimuli of tissue-damaging potential (including mechanical, chemical and thermal stimuli) are converted by the sensory cells into action potentials.

Stage 2 (transmission) involves the conduction of these action potentials along afferent neurons to the DH of the spinal cord.

Stage 3 (modulation), coding of nociceptive information occurs at the level of spinal DH. Modulation at the DH can be excitatory or inhibitory, thereby increasing or decreasing the resulting pain.

Stage 4 involves generation of autonomic, affective, cognitive and behavioural responses to the painful stimulus, leading to pain perception.

Need for individualized pain management

An individual's perception of pain may be greatly influenced by the emotional and behavioural responses and is strongly correlated to his/her culture, personal history and genetic makeup. For instance, presence of different haplotypes of the catecholamine-O-methyl transferase gene has been linked to variability in pain perception in humans. Thus, treatment for pain must be tailored for each individual and should focus on interruption of reinforcement of the pain behaviour and modulation of the pain response. Important factors for consideration for treatment recommendation include individual's response to prior appropriate treatment management, compliance and drug abuse/dependence behaviour. The biopsychosocial model of pain encompasses the biological, psychological and social aspects of pain and has been

increasingly used in a variety of chronic pain settings. Since the experience of pain is heterogeneous in nature; a "one size fits all" approach would not be the most ideal way to manage pain. In short, an individualized approach to treatment based on the genetic, cultural, social and behavioural aspects of the patient may help in the optimal management of pain across different clinical settings.

Advantages of Homeopathy

Homeopathy is part of mainstream medicine in most countries in Europe and Latin America as well as in India and Russia. Most of its medicines are classified as over-the-counter drugs by the Food and Drug Administration.

Practical Protocols for Post-Surgery/Post-Dental Extraction Pain Management:-

This protocol takes advantage of homeopathy's ability to work preventively when given right before it is needed.

- The morning of surgery (or the night before if surgery is in the early morning), one dose of Arnica 30c. Because the pellets dissolve quickly in the mouth and are not swallowed, they do not violate niper os restrictions.
- Soon after surgery, a dose of Phosphorus 30c, only if the person is drowsy, disoriented, or nauseous after anaesthesia, or if there is excessive bleeding (e.g., after a tooth extraction).
- For the first three days, Arnica 30c three times a day. Then Calendula 30c three times a day until the wound is healed.
- If there is nerve pain (the patient reports pain shooting along the path of a nerve, or pain like an electric shock, or pins and needles, or numbness), give Hypericum 30c three times a day until resolved.
- If there is nerve damage, injury to the spine, or a headache following an epidural or spinal tap, give Hypericum as well.

If symptoms are very severe, the medicine can be given more frequently, as often as hourly. If a family member wants to bring the medicines to their loved one in the hospital, an easy way to do this is to dissolve two pellets in a small bottle of water (about 125 mL) and have the patient sip on it occasionally, labelling what each bottle of water is for. If the person is unconscious, the water can be dabbed on their lips. The water solution of Calendula can be used to irrigate the wound and dampen the gauze in a wet-to-dry dressing in order to speed healing.

Of course, this is the ideal scenario, and it may not be practical in a hospital unless a physician writes an order for the medicines. Sometimes family members are able to bring the medicines in; in other cases, they have to wait until the patient comes home. The sooner the protocol can be started, the more effective it will be.

A homeopathic preparation of a nontoxic herb such as Calendula can enhance its action and also allow for healing from the inside out. For example, if someone has extensive first-degree burns or large areas of abrasion, dissolving homeopathic Calendula in the mouth can be as effective as applying it topically over a large area. The oral administration can be simpler and

less painful. For a tooth extraction, the same protocol can be followed, with the possible addition of the medicines for dry socket described under Toothache below.

Homeopathic Medicines for Specific Pain Conditions

A well-known principle of homeopathy is that the medicine must be individualized to the patient: 10 patients with fibromyalgia or rheumatoid arthritis are likely to receive 10 different medicines from a professional homeopath because each patient has a unique pattern of symptoms. However, this primarily applies to chronic conditions.

In an emergency situation, or in the case of a very virulent infectious disease, the nature of the trauma or infection imposes the same symptom pattern on nearly everyone. For example, Arnica is useful in almost all acute cases of soft-tissue trauma with bruising, swelling, and/or soreness. This makes it possible to create a standardized protocol using Arnica for post-surgery recuperation or for sports injuries. Hypericum, with its symptom set of numbness, tingling, other paraesthesia, and electric-shock sensations along a nerve path—especially after a blow to the spine or a nerve-rich area of the body—similarly becomes a universal remedy when an accident or surgery causes acute nerve pain or nerve damage.

When it comes to short-term or palliative pain management (e.g., treating a sprained ankle or providing temporary relief for arthritic pain), the prescriber typically chooses from among the homeopathic medicines well known historically for clinical effectiveness (perhaps 3–20 top medicines for each condition). Among them, the choice is then based on individual characteristics: does the patient find relief from a heating pad or from an ice pack, for example; do they prefer to limber up an aching joint, or do they need to keep it still? This article will provide a simplified version for each of several types of pain, differentiating among just a few of the best-known medicines in order to make homeopathy accessible for healthcare professionals in other disciplines. This will be followed by a review of the research and finally by resources for further study.

Back Pain and Other Musculoskeletal Disorders

- *Rhus tox* and *Ruta grav* for joint pain with stiffness that is worse in damp weather, needs to be limbered up, and feels better from the application of heat. These two medicines are among the most effective and can be difficult to differentiate. You may observe patients needing *Rhus tox* swinging a joint to limber it up (the “rusty gate” syndrome) or restlessly pacing in the waiting room. *Rhus tox* is the medicine most often used for fibromyalgia. *Ruta grav* has additional qualities of lameness and weakness, for example those whose knees go out from under them when going downstairs.
- *Bryonia* is for patients with the opposite symptom: they feel worse from stretching and in fact worse from the slightest motion, even the jarring motion of a heavy tread, so they tend to guard or splint their joints. *Bryonia* is especially good for the serous membranes. Hence, it is good for bursitis and pleuritis.
- *Nux vomica* is a top remedy for lower back pain in those with typical *Nux vomica* symptoms: competitive, ambitious, driven, irritable, apt to use coffee, alcohol, spicy or fried foods, sometimes recreational drugs, therefore apt to have a congested liver.
- **Protocol:** Using the 30c potency (strength) most commonly available in stores, a dose of two pellets dissolved in the mouth can be repeated every one to three hours, depending on the

intensity of the pain. In general with homeopathic medicines, the medicine is repeated frequently until it starts to take effect, then slowed down or even stopped until symptoms return, so that the body can heal itself.

Broken Bones

Homeopathy can speed bone healing, as well as reduce the need for analgesics, according to a study done in India. These three medicines will cover most aspects of bone healing:

- *Symphytum* is by far the most common medicine for broken bones. Research shows that it can promote callus formation and speed the union of fractures.
- *Ruta grav* is used when there is a contusion or bone bruise, or when the predominant sensation is soreness rather than sharp pain along the line of the fracture, as in *Symphytum*.
- *Calc phos* is used for growing pains in children and for broken bones that take a long time to heal.
- Protocol: Using the 30c potency (strength) most commonly available in stores, a dose of two pellets dissolved in the mouth once a day.

Labor Pains

The research on homeopathy in childbirth is primarily limited to the study of just one medicine: *Caulophyllum*. However, a range of medicines to reduce labor pains are included here based on 150 years of experience and the need to reduce the use of epidurals. Epidurals prolong labor and can trigger a "cascade of interventions" leading to a greater need for an oxytocin injection, a higher rate of instrumental births, and a higher risk of Cesarean section due to fetal distress.

Homeopathic medicines can be given in advance to strengthen the uterus and prepare the woman for labor. In one research study, women given a combination of five homeopathic remedies during the ninth month of pregnancy had a 40% shorter labor and only 25% as many complications of labor.

The following homeopathic medicines have a long history of successful use for labor pains among homeopathic obstetricians and midwives. Give a dose of 30c as often as needed to minimize pain and keep the contractions longer and more efficient. The stronger potency 200c will work better for extreme pain. However, it is recommended only for use by homeopathic midwives and others experienced with using homeopathic medicines during labor (not because the higher potency is dangerous, but because it can be more difficult to discern when to repeat it).

- *Aconite* for violent, intense, sudden labor pains, especially when the woman is afraid she will die.
- *Belladonna* for extreme labor pains when the woman has the typical *Belladonna* symptoms (a wild look in the eyes, reddened cheeks, delirium).
- *Caulophyllum* for when both the labor pains and the woman's moods are quickly changeable: the labor pains seem to flit here and there, the woman is having mood swings.

- Chamomilla for when the pain is so unbearable, nothing can satisfy her: she wants to order everyone out of the room, or she demands something, and as soon as it is given, she refuses it and demands something else.
- Cimicifuga for when the labor pains radiate down the thighs, the woman feels gloomy “as if a black cloud is over her,” and she may say she feels she is going insane.
- Kali carbonicum for back labor and needle-like pains.
- Sepia also for back labor with other typical Sepia symptoms such as extreme fatigue leading to weepiness and irritability.

After pains will also respond to some of the same homeopathic medicines:

- Amica for its typical feeling of bruised soreness and aversion to being touched.
- Chamomilla for when the woman is irritable and dissatisfied, as above.
- Hypericum for pains in the coccyx, and for the effects of an epidural such as a headache.
- Kali carbonicum for needle-like pains in the lower back.
- Pulsatilla for changeable pains and moodiness, including mild weepiness and a desire for consolation and for company in her pain.

Tooth Pain and Other Pain Conditions Treated by Dentists

- Hypericum 30c, two to four times a day, whenever there is nerve pain, such as following oral surgery or in an impending root-canal situation.
- Chamomilla 30c as often as once an hour for excruciating tooth pain in adults as well as in teething infants.
- Symphytum 30c, once or twice a day, for pain and swelling after dental implant surgery (because Symphytum heals teeth and bones), as well as Arnica, which is always useful for postoperative pain and swelling.

For any toothache and dry socket after a tooth extraction (an extremely painful condition in which the protective blood clot that forms over the empty socket fails to form or is dislodged, exposing nerve endings in the socket):

- Belladonna for throbbing pain.
- Chamomilla for extreme pain relieved by warm drinks and driving the person to angry outbursts at family members and healthcare providers.
- Coffea for agonizing pain relieved by cold water in the mouth, with oversensitivity to any sensory stimulation.
- Hepar sulph if the dry socket becomes infected.
- Silica afterwards to expel the contents of the socket (food debris, pus, etc.).

All of these medicines are available in a 30c potency and can be given hourly or even more often until the excruciating pain is relieved, then three times a day would be a typical dosage when the crisis is over and the patient is on the mend.

The same medicines can be used for an abscessed tooth or indeed any boil or abscess, with the addition of Mercurius, thus:

- Belladonna for the first stage of an abscess, when the area is red, warm, throbbing, and swollen but the pus has not yet gathered.
- Hepar sulph for the second stage when the pus has gathered, and the area is extremely tender and sensitive to exposure to heat or cold, to touch, to the slightest draft, which makes the person touchy and averse to having anyone come close.
- Mercurius is used for the same stage, when the pus has gathered, if several of the typical Mercurius symptoms are present: excess salivation, night sweats, bad breath, and possibly small sores in the mouth, plus the person is extremely sensitive to the temperature in the environment, constantly adjusting heat or air conditioning.
- Silica is used for the last phase, when the pus has come to a head and is ready to drain; Silica will speed the bursting of the abscess and quickly heal the tissues underneath.

Trigeminal Neuralgia

Trigeminal neuralgia is known as the "suicide disease" because the pain can be so unbearable and so resistant to treatment that it can drive sufferers to suicide. In one small study, homeopathic treatment brought 60% relief of the pain after four months.

Two of the most common medicines for trigeminal neuralgia can be distinguished simply by which side of the face is in pain: Sanguinaria is used for right-sided trigeminal neuralgia, and Spigelia for left-sided neuralgia. The dosage is 200c (a high potency) every 15 minutes until relief, then wait until relapse before redosing. Remember that these are only two of the possible medicines for the condition. If the first one attempted does not work, a professional homeopath may be able to provide relief with a better-matching medicine.

Headaches

While research shows that homeopathy can treat headaches successfully, such a wide range of medicines can be useful that it would be impossible to distill them into just a few recommendations. One leading homeopathic reference work lists >60 likely medicines for headaches, making a randomized controlled trial difficult if not impossible. Headaches provide an excellent example of how homeopathic medicines are matched to the individual's symptoms. A homeopath interviewing a patient with frequent headaches will ask what part of the head is affected; whether the left side or right side; what time of day they come on, or what triggers them; whether throbbing or dull; what the pain feels like; and other symptoms specific to the pain. More importantly, the homeopath will ask what stress or trauma might have led to the pattern of repeated headaches. Then the homeopath will choose from among dozens of medicines well known to be effective for headaches.

Cancer

Terminal Stages of Cancer outlines indications for 11 pain remedies. These remedies include Aconite, Arsenicum Album, Aurum Metallicum—which is used for bone pains, Cadmium Sulph—especially for stomach cancer and after bad effects of chemotherapy, Chelidonium—especially for pain of cancer that has metastasized to the liver, Euphorbium for burning pains of cancer (like Arsenicum) but better from cold applications, Hydrastis, Magnesia Phos, Nux

Vomica, which Dr. Ramakrishnan says is a good remedy to try when Arsenicum has ceased to help, Opium, and Plumbum Iodatum. Murphy also wrote that Tarantula is to be given "to palliate death pains and agony".

Conclusion

With pain homeopathic treatment, you can find relief from your pain and inflammation. Homeopathic remedies can also be used alongside other treatments to help you get a better quality of life and reduce your pain. The key is to find the right homeopathic remedy for your symptoms, and the best way to do that is through the guidance of a trained or expert homeopathic practitioner.

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