

REVIEW



Homeopathy In Dentistry- A New Avenue Visited

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ABSTRACT:

Homeopathy in dentistry is a less visited avenue in the management of orofacial diseases. Homeopathy is a safe and natural alternative that is effective in both adults and children. Homeopathic remedies are used in dentistry to improve the psychological or emotional condition of patients without the side effects of conventional drugs. A Medline search was made to gather evidence in support of homeopathic drugs used in dentistry and various RCT, case control studies as well as reviews published in several journals were studied to bring out this paper.

Key words: Homeopathy, *allium sepa*, *borax*, *chamomilla*

INTRODUCTION

Dental health care professionals are facing challenges in managing acute or chronic dental conditions due to failure in regression of symptoms or side effects of traditional treatment regimens. In light of these facts, dental health care approach is directed toward holistic methods like ayurveda, acupuncture, naturopathy or homeopathy in managing diseases and conditions related to orofacial structures. Homeopathy as a part of holistic dentistry is said to provide effective treatment to the patients while minimising side effects. Homeopathy is not a replacement or alternative to clinical dental care but can be used alongside conventional treatments and drug regimens. This review concentrates on history of homeopathy, its indications in dentistry, drugs and dosages used along with evidences supporting uses of homeopathy in dentistry.

History of Homeopathy

Homoeopathy is an alternative therapy that has

been used for over 200 years. It was discovered by the German Physician Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843), who was carrying out research into a cure for malaria. He found that "cinchona bark" (Peruvian bark from which quinine is derived) stimulated a fever similar to malaria in healthy patients, and deduced that substances triggering these symptoms could be used to treat similar signs of sickness in an ill person. He then discovered that by diluting remedies, their medicinal powers were not reduced but rather enhanced. Hahnemann was dissatisfied with the medicine of his day due to its harmful effects, and wished to discover better and safer ways of prescribing medicines. He decided to investigate the effects of various medicinal substances on himself and other healthy volunteers. From these experiments, which were called "provings", led him to observe and describe the basic principles of homoeopathic medicine as described below.

According to Hahnemann, "The causes of our maladies cannot be material, since the least foreign material substance, however mild it may appear to us, if introduced into our blood-vessels, is promptly ejected by the vital force".^{1,2} Consistent with this philosophy is

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the belief that it is more important to pay attention to symptoms than to the external causes of disease. Knowing the specific symptoms of illness, treatment is then a matter of finding a substance or substances that induced the same symptoms in a healthy individual. This is the basis of Hahnemann's "Principle of Similars."⁵

THE PRINCIPLES ^{3,5,22,23,25}

Law of Similars ; This is based on the principle "Similia Similibus Curentur", which means "Like is cured by Like" i.e. a substance which produces symptoms in a healthy person cures similar symptoms in a sick person.

Individuality: The homeopath attempts to best match the patient's symptoms to a remedy "symptom picture". A "symptom picture" is comprised of all the patient's symptoms (physical, mental and emotional) and includes such things as food cravings, temperature preferences and personality, as well as conventional physical symptoms. Such individualized treatment of specific symptoms is fundamental in the practice of "classical" homeopathy.

The Minimum Dose: This refers to the use of the smallest possible dose to evoke a healing response. The use of "infinitesimal doses" is the most controversial principle of homeopathy. This principle states that the more a substance has been potentized, the more potent it is. Homeopathic remedies are derived from original substances (plant, animal or mineral) and are reduced to an "infinitesimal dose" through a pharmaceutical process known as "potentization".

The Potentized Remedy : Homeopathic remedies are mostly derived from plants, but minerals, animal products, healthy and unhealthy tissues and secretions and other sources are also used to prepare the remedies. This involves the preparation of a base substance (or Mother Tincture) of the original substance in a hydroalcoholic solution, successive dilutions of the mixture and succession (vigorous pounding) of the mixture after each dilution. Through this process of potentiation, no chemical or physical trace of the original substance remains past the 12th decimal dilution.

Rationale for homeopathy in dentistry are:

1. Prevent or inhibit the development of disease processes in the oral cavity.

2. Provide treatments that work alongside conventional medicine.
3. Prevent or limit complications of surgical intervention.
4. Reduce dental phobias and anxieties.
5. Facilitate recovery from dental trauma.
6. Manage dental conditions with a holistic approach.

Homoeopathy for Dental Problems Here are some dental problems and the homoeopathic remedies that can be used in their management: as in all homeopathic prescribing, the remedy selection is more important than potency.

Abscesses :

1. Belladonna early dental abscesses accompanied by redness and throbbing which is aggravated by slightest touch .(30X every 30-60 minutes)
2. Hepar sulphuris calcareum : where abscess is accompanied by pus formation , increased salivation, and where gums are sour to touch and bleed easily, repeated doses of 6X will encourage pus discharge , while higher potency (30x-200x two or three times daily) will help abort pus formation.
3. Silicea once pus is draining, silicea 6X will hasten the discharge.
4. Myristica where abscess is swollen and accompanied by numbness of the area, especially suited for wisdom teeth in potency of 6X
5. Calendula dilute the tincture 1 part to 20 parts of water . use as a gentle but effective mouth rinse.

Apprehension (anticipation of dental visit)

- i. Gelsium fear accompanied by "weak knees", diarrhea, and drowsy behavior. 30x to be taken the night before , the morning of and ½ to 1 hour before the dental visit.
- ii. Aconite when fear is accompanied by great panic as well as physical and emotional restlessness, 30x to be taken the night before, the morning of and ½ to 1 hour before the dental visit.
- iii. Coffe cruda when anxiety is accompanied by intolerance to noise or music . 30x to be taken the night before , the morning of and ½ to 1 hour before the dental visit.

- iv. Chamomilla this is not for apprehension, per se, but may greatly help those individuals with lowered pain threshold, three doses of 30x over several hours prior to dental visit.

BLEEDING -Almost all post surgical bleeding is well controlled by pressing moist gauze pad or tea bag over the bleeding area. In cases where bleeding is not controlled by local measures certain homeopathic intervention can be used such as

1. Phosphorous 6X to 20x every 10-30 minutes till bleeding stops.
2. Arnica if bleeding is accompanied by bruising or soreness, 30x every 10-30 minutes until bleeding is controlled.

Diseases involving pulp and periapical region :

Antimonium crudum: Use for a toothache that is worse at night and is aggravated by heat.

Aranea diadema: Use for sudden, severe pain in the teeth after lying down.

Belladonna: Use for throbbing tooth that's worse when pressure is applied.

Calcarea carbonica: Use for a toothache that worsens when exposed to hot or cold air.

Chamomilla: Use for a toothache with intolerable pain that's worse from warmth and not better with cold.

Coffea cruda: Use for toothache that worsens with heat and is relieved by ice.

Ferrum metallicum: Use for a toothache that is relieved by ice water.

Magnesia carbonica: Use for a toothache that is worse at night. Patient must get up and walk about for relief.

Plantago major: Use for a toothache that is better with pressure and worse without cold air.

Pulsatilla: Use for a toothache that is relieved by holding cold water in the mouth.

Staphysagria: Use for pain from major decay of a number of teeth.

DISEASES RELATED TO GINGIVAL AND PERIODONTIUM

Arsenicum album: Use for unhealthy, bleeding gums.

Ferrum phosphoricum: Use for poor gum tone or gums that bleed after brushing.

Hypericum: Use for tender gum tissue and to promote healing.

Kali chloricum: Use for acute ulcerative tissue.

Naturium muriaticum: Tissue integrity.

Hepar sulphuris: Tissue with suppuration, chronic abscesses.

Silicea: Periodontal abscess with swollen glands.

Staphysagria: Loose teeth, pain increased by pressure.

Symphytum: Injuries to periosteum. Stimulates growth of epithelium on ulcerated surfaces.

Mercurius solubilis: Use for acute ulcerative tissue with a coated tongue and metallic taste in the mouth.

Nux vomica: Use for swollen painful gums when the back of the tongue has a whitish coating and when the patient consumes a lot of stimulants such as coffee and tea.

Phosphorous: Use on swollen gums that bleed easily, and when there's an overproduction of saliva. Ruta graveolens ("dry socket"): Use for injured bone and alveolitis.

DISEASES RELATED TO TRIGEMINAL NERVE^{9,10,11,12}

Aconite: Trigeminal neuralgia

Aranea diadema: Use for radiating pain in the right side of the face that is aggravated by cold. Also use for sudden, severe pain in the teeth at night after lying down.

Cuprum metallicum: Use for cramping of muscles.

Gelsemium sempervirens: Use to relieve headache and pain of the upper back and neck, which extends over the head and for dizziness and numbness.

Ignatia: Use for headache as if a nail were driven through the side of the head.

Lachesis: Left-sided complaints.

Lycopodium: Right-sided complaints. Magnesia phosphorous: Use for spasmodic pains made worse by cold water and made better by heat and rubbing.

Sanguinaria: Right-sided neuralgia, facial migraine.

Spigelia: Use for pain involving the eye, cheek, and left temple areas.

Zincum phosphoricum: Sharp pains on the right side of head.

Zincum valerian: Sharp pains on the left side of head.

POSTOPERATIVE COMPLICATIONS

Apis mellifica: Good for post injection soreness after dental work.

Chamomilla: Give one hour prior to dental appointment for patients with a low pain threshold. It also expedites the wearing off of the numbness.

Hypericum: Use where there is an injured nerve.

Ledum: Use for puncture wounds and soreness resulting from a dental injection.

Magnesia phosphorica: Use for stiff, sore jaws following prolonged dental work when the muscles are cramped and feel better with warmth.

Staphysagria: Use for incision-type wounds after soft tissue surgery.

Symphytum: Use for trauma of bone and periosteum.

EMPHASIS ON CONDITIONS INVOLVING TOOTH SOCKET POST EXTRACTION eg Dry socket

1. Belladonna 30x every 30-60 minutes if accompanied by throbbing pain.
2. Rula graveoleus 6x for any surgery or other injuries to the jaws or other facial bones.
3. Calendula dilute the tincture 1 part to 20 parts of water and use as a mouthwash.

CONDITIONS RELATED TO SALIVATION^{9,11,12,13} :

Baryta carbonica: Use when there is excessive saliva during sleep.

Bryonia alba: Use for an extremely dry mouth, with dryness of mucous membranes and great thirst.

Phosphorous: Use for hyper salivation and when gums are swollen and bleed easily.

Pulsatilla: Use for diminished saliva with no thirst.

DISEASES RELATED TO TEMPOROMANDIBULAR JOINT (TMJ)^{1,10,11,12}:

Arum triphyllum: Use for pain in joint on swallowing.

Calcarea flourica: Use for hypermobile joints

Calcarea phosphorica: Use when mouth cannot be opened without pain.

Carbo vegetabilis: Use for vertigo with nausea and tinnitus.

Chamomilla: Use for low pain threshold. Unbearable spasms of pain, radiating into the ear.

Cuprum metallicum: Use for trismus of muscles.

Granatum: Use for painful cracking of the joint. Mangesium phosphorica: Use for muscle spasms.

Phytolacca : Use for earaches with pain extending into teeth, jaw, and throat.

Rhus toxicodendron: Use for joint stiffness that improves with movement and for "Popping" of TMJ.

TOOTH ERUPTION¹⁵

Calcarea carbonica: Use for a delayed eruption.

Chamomilla: Use for difficult teething.

Zincum metallicum: Use for teeth gritting during difficult dentition with loose teeth and bleeding gums.

ORAL ULCERATIONS^{5,7,8,12,14}

Natrum muriaticum: Use for cold sores and fever blisters. Lips and corners of mouth dry and cracked lips.

Nitricum acidum: Use for ulcers with irregular edges and a raw appearance with a tendency to bleed easily.

DECAY OF MILK TEETH

Kreosotum - This remedy has premature decay of milk teeth; they become yellow, and dark and then decay. It also has aching pains in diseased teeth.

The current and proposed uses of homeopathy covers a wide range of diseases and ailments. An attempt has been made here to classify the quality of evidence that supports these various applications. This classification is based on existing studies, most of which are cited in the references, and not on an exhaustive review of the entire literature on homeopathy. The broad classification include applications with proven benefits, applications with substantial evidence that require additional support, promising applications that need substantial additional evidence, and proposed future applications. Proven benefits of homeopathy include the treatment of oral ulcerations

5,7,8,12,14, sialorrhea^{11,12,13}, neuralgias^{9,10,11,12} xerostomia^{11,12,13}; applications with substantial evidence include the prevention TMJ disorders,^{1,10,11,12}; promising applications include the autoimmune disorders affecting oral mucosa; and proposed future applications include the treatment of lichen planus, bruxism. The use of homeopathy in medical practice is rapidly increasing, as there are no dearth of studies that demonstrate the efficacy of homeopathy^{5,9,10,11,12,14,16,22,23,24,25}

Conclusion :Homeopathy is an emerging field of dental medicine that is useful in management of conditions affecting orofacial structures .With advantages of minimal side effects and favourable treatment outcome, homeopathy has emerged as one of the alternative therapy in cases of treatment failure or poor response to conventional drugs. The knowledge and understanding of Homeopathic approach of treatment is still an ongoing process and further research should be carried out in this regard. A note of caution should be applied, negative findings are being reported^{13,14,16,22,23,24,25} as would be expected as more studies are being performed and as more applications are being sought for the use of homeopathy. Overall, homeopathy appear to be here to stay as part of the physician's armamentarium for the prevention and treatment of disease; however, more evidence-based research is required to firmly establish medical areas of use and areas in which homeopathy is not applicable.

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