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Emerging evidence of homoeopathy in treating COVID-19 pandemic: An overview

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Abstract

Corona virus disease or COVID-19 is a viral disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 and declared pandemic by WHO. The COVID-19 infection has emerged from Wuhan, China in late December of 2019 and soon become a global health emergency spreading over 216 countries and territories around the world as there are no specific established treatments or vaccines available till date. Scientists around the world are constantly engaged in research work to find out specific treatment and vaccines for this disease. Several cases of treatment are being reported by the Homoeopathic physicians all over the world and the results are promising. Some of the Homoeopathic medicine which are being used with good results are *Bryonia alba*, *Phosphorus*, *Arsenic album*, *Gelsemium sempervirens* and *Carboneum oxygenisatum*. Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India has recommended the Homoeopathic medicine Arsenic album 30 as an immune booster for its possible role in preventing COVID-19 infection, and results are slowly coming out in the favour of this medicine. Homoeopathy as an adjuvant to the standard care should be evaluated for the management of COVID-19.

Keywords: Homoeopathy, COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2, homoeoprophylaxis

Introduction

Wuhan Municipal Health Commission, China, reported a cluster of cases of pneumonia of unknown etiology in Wuhan, Hubei Province in late December of 2019 [1]. Eventually, a new coronavirus (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 or SARS-CoV-2) was identified and reported by the WHO on 9th Jan 2020 [2]. SARS-CoV-2 belongs to the beta Corona Viruses category. It has round or elliptic and often pleomorphic form, and a diameter of approximately 60–140 nm [3]. The transmission of coronavirus is reported through respiratory droplets, human contact, and fecal-oral route [4]. COVID-19 (Coronavirus disease 2019), which is a febrile respiratory infectious disease is caused by this newly identified virus. [5] On 11th March 2020, the WHO declared it as a pandemic [2]. While many patients with confirmed COVID-19 infection develop a common set of symptoms of fever, dry cough, and tiredness, some of them may suffer from severe symptoms of respiratory distress, whereas most patients are either asymptomatic or only mildly ill [6, 7]. Apart from this, some less common symptoms are aches and pains, sore throat, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, headache, loss of taste or smell, and a rash on the skin, or discoloration of fingers or toes. The average incubation period of the disease is 5.2 days (i.e., the time delay from infection to symptoms onset) [8], but it can be varied between 2 to 14 days with a 99% confidence interval [9]. The case fatality rate (CFR) is widely varied from country to country, the average CFR is 4.2%, but it is as high as 14.3% in Italy to as low as 0.50% in Iceland [10] In India, CFR¹⁰ is 2.50%. SARS-CoV-2 can affect irrespective of gender specification but male cases are more tended to become serious. The number of men who died from COVID-19 is 2.4 times that of women [11] As on 21st July, 2020, from 216 countries 1,45,38,094 confirmed cases of COVID-19 were reported, with 6,07,358 case fatalities associated with this disease [12]. In India confirmed reported case is 11,55,191 till 21st July, 2020, with 28,084 reported deaths [13] As this virus is newly discovered there is no specific treatment is available, but the spread of this virus can be minimized by following guidelines issued by WHO or Government authorities which include maintaining a physical distancing of at least 6 feet, washing hand at frequent interval with soap and water or alcohol-based (atleast 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer, use of face mask, observe Respiratory etiquettes and avoid social gathering [14]. In the absence of specific treatment or vaccine for Covid-19, Homoeopathy can play a pivotal role in the treatment and control of this disease, similar to what it has done since the time of

its inception [4, 15] Eventually Homoeopathy can helps in reducing the burden came on health system during this pandemic.

This paper is intended to find all available modalities in Homoeopathy to control and treat the present prevailing pandemic.

Material and Method

We have searched the Internet till 20 July 2020 to find the Homoeopathic treatment given for COVID-19 patients across the world. As this is a very initial stage for the treatment of newly discovered virus with Homoeopathy, the search is not only restricted to the published research article in a journal but also included unpublished manuscript/data available in the public domain and the information released/published in media. We have also included the information of Homoeopathic medicine claimed to be used as prophylaxis or immune booster for this illness.

Results

After thorough search we have found seven articles and five media reports meet with the objectives of this paper. Five articles and one media briefing were related to the treatment aspects towards the confirmed and semiologically

confirmed COVID-19 cases. Two articles and four media reports were related with the role of Homoeopathic medicine as prophylaxis or immune booster. All the search results were summarized in Table 1 and 2 with details of initiatives taken by the Homoeopathic physicians to combat and curtail the effects of SARS-CoV-2 along with the outcomes of their interventions. Three articles has provided the details in terms of age and sex of 84 patients. Minimum and maximum age in years of infected patients were 6 and 79 respectively. 35 males and 48 females were affected by the virus, gender of one patient was not mentioned. A total of 177 patients were treated with Homoeopathic medicine. Most common symptoms presented are summarized in table 3. Runny nose and sneezing were uncommon symptoms and presented in only one and two cases respectively. Most commonly and frequently used medicine were *Bryonia alba*, *Phosphorus*, *Arsenic album* and *Gelsemium sempervirens*. Camphora was prescribed to more than 40 individuals by a single physician. Other medicines which were used atleast in 5 patients are Sulphur, Hepar sulphuris, *Antimonium tartaricum*, *Belladonna* and *Eupatorium perfoliatum*. The frequency of medicines used/repetition are illustrated in fig. 1.

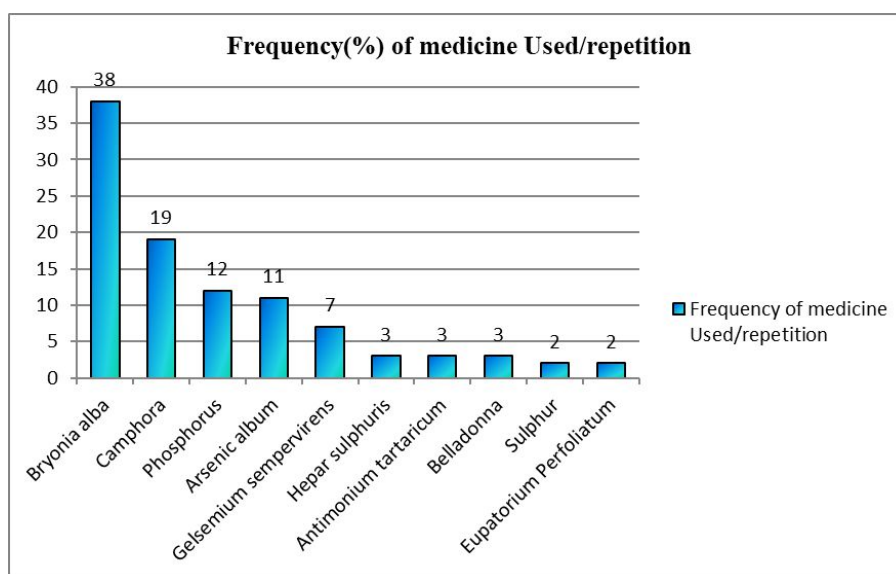


Fig 1: Showing frequency of medicines used during treatment

Table 1: Homoeopathic medicine as a treatment for COVID-19

Sl No.	Sample Size	Confirmed cases	Semeiologically confirmed	Medicine prescribed	Outcome
André Saine, N.D., F.C.A.H., D.H.A.N.P., D.Ht., USA. Case Management of the COVID-19 Patient with Genuine Homoeopathy — An update					
	5 (USA)	4	1	Individualized treatment with Sulphur, Bryonia, Arsenic Alb, Phosphorus, and Natrium Mur.	All Improved to Normal (One also has co-morbidity DM)
	6 (Istambul)	5	1	Individualized treatment with Bryonia, Arsenic Alb, and Phosphorus.	All Improved to Normal (3 patients have co-morbidity viz., DM, Asthma, COPD and Hypertension, 1 patient has only 50% right lung after lobectomy and hepatitis B carrier)
	5 (Other location)	0	5	All the cases are complex and treated with various individualized medicines in succession.	All recovered from COVID-19. All are suffering from some chronic co-morbidity, such as medulloblastoma, melanoma, multiple myeloma, encephalitis, and immune-suppressed stage III small cell lung carcinoma.

	40 (Lyon, France)	9	31	Initially <i>Bryonia alba</i> was given. But when symptoms get relapsed in some patients individualized medicine were prescribed.	2 died before commencement of <i>Bryonia alba</i> , 7 died among patients whom <i>Bryonia alba</i> were given, 2 died under individualized Homoeopathic treatment. 29 recovered completely. All patients were in a old age home (between 85 and 105 years old) and severely mentally (i.e., dementia) or physically (i.e., quadriplegic) handicapped.
Andrea Valeri, Symptomatic COVID-19 positive and likely patients treated by Homoeopathic physicians – an Italian descriptive study					
	50	10	40	Individualized single medicine. <i>Bryonia alba</i> (21 times); <i>Arsenicum album</i> (16 times); <i>Phosphorus flavus</i> (9 times); <i>Atropa belladonna</i> (6 times); <i>Antimonium tartaricum</i> (6 times); <i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i> (4 times); <i>Phosphoricum acidum</i> (3 times); unspecified patient's basic remedy (3 times); <i>Lycopodium clavatum</i> (3 times); Sulphur (3 times); Hepar sulphur. (2 times); <i>Kalium phosphoricum</i> (2 times); <i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i> (2 times); <i>Mercurius solubilis</i> , <i>Chelidonium majus</i> , <i>Spigelia anthelmia</i> , <i>Solanum dulcamara</i> , <i>Psorinum</i> , <i>Spongia tosta</i> , <i>Ferrum phosphoricum</i> , <i>Ruta graveolens</i> , <i>Causticum hahnemanni</i> , <i>Thuya occidentalis</i> , <i>Streptococcinum</i> , <i>Ignatia amara</i> (once each).	Hospitalization rate zero. All managed successfully with Homoeopathic Medicine. No adverse event.
Dr. Sara Diani MD, Dr. Paolo Benedetti MD, COVID, AND HOMOEOPATHY: 9 cases that were cured with phosphorous – the research of the genus epidemicus					
	9	1	8	Phosphorus 3 times a day in the beginning; with the first significant improvement, which normally occurred in two days, then reduced the dose to two times a day; then only once a day to complete the treatment. One patient needed <i>Stannum metallicum</i> in the healing phase.	All but one of them healed rapidly within 4 to 5 days.
Dr. Aditya Kasariyans and Dr. Rajan Sankaran, Study in Iran: Homoeopathy for Coronavirus Covid-19 Infection					
	40 plus case	Not mentioned	Not mentioned	Camphor 1M	All improved.
Ka Lun Aaron To, Hong Kong Association of Homoeopathy, Hong Kong. Homoeopathic Clinical Features of 18 Patients in COVID-19 Outbreaks in Hong Kong					
	18	16	2	<i>Bryonia alba</i> 4 and <i>Gelsemium sempervirens</i> 12. Other <i>Arsenicum album</i> and <i>Eupatorium perfoliatum</i> .	Improvement noticed in all cases
Dr. Pradeep Kumar Gupta, Naimi Nath Homoeopathic Medical College & Hospital, Agra, India.					
	50	50	0	<i>Bryonia alba</i>	25 patients in one arm who were treated with allopathic drugs and homoeopathic pills, mainly <i>Bryonia alba</i> , recovered in two-three days and tested negative for covid-19 in six-seven days. Whereas second arm of 25 patients on allopathic drugs and a placebo took three-five weeks to recover.

Table 2: Homoeopathic medicine as prophylaxis or immune booster for COVID-19

Sl No.	Study	Sample Size	Medicine prescribed	Outcome
1	Dr. Niraj Parikh, Dr. Devang Parikh. Role of Homoeopathy in Covid-19 Management- A Clinical Experience. Ahmedabad Homoeopathic Medical College (AHMC), Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India.	420	Arsenic Alb 30	No positive case reported among persons who received Ars Alb, whereas more than 1500 cases in the same area were positive who has not taken this medicine.

2	An approach of Govt. of Gujarat	17,725 under quarantine	Arsenic Alb	Only 15 people developed COVID-19.
3	Cuban Government approach	To the elderly and other vulnerable people	compound PrevengHo-Vir (A Homoeopathic medicine)	The outcome yet to publish.
4	Thomas M. V, Bijukumar D, Nirmal Ghosh O.S, Muraleedharan K.C, Biju S.G. Efficacy of Arsenicum Alb 30c for Upregulating Immunological Markers among Residents of Covid-19 Related Hot Spot Areas in Pathanamthitta, Kerala	61	Arsenic Alb 30	Arsenicum album 30 C is found effective for upregulating the immune markers and there by maintaining the immunity of individuals with COVID-19 related subjective distress.
5	Pandalam Municipality, Pathanamthitta Dist., Kerala, India	107 direct contact of COVID-19 positive patients	Arsenic Alb 30	None of the direct contact of the disease got infected and found negative for COVID-19.
6	Mandal Parishad Development Officer, Mandal Praja Parishad, Korukonda, East Godavari Dist., Andhra Pradesh, India	Population of 14 Gram Panchayats of Korukonda Mandal. Exact number was not mentioned.	Arsenic Alb 30	8 persons in three families who didn't take medicine turn COVID-19 positive, whereas other family members of same family didn't affected by the disease even being the primary contact.

Table 3: Symptoms presentation

Most Common symptoms	Number of cases (Percentage)	Other symptoms	Number of cases (Percentage)
Dry cough	37 (86)		
Weakness	36 (83)		
Headache	27 (65)	Altered taste and smell	12 (28)
Fever	21 (49)	Decreased appetite	12 (28)
Sore throat	21 (49)	Diarrhea	10 (23)
Body ache	21 (49)	Low back pain	06 (14)
Shortness of breath	20 (46)		

*Symptoms recorded from 43 patients

Discussion

One of the most important challenges of public health is to control the epidemic outbreaks, affecting many individuals in a population at the same time. Dr. Samuel Hahnemann given guidelines in the Organon of Medicine Aphorism 241, as “every single epidemic is of a peculiar, uniform character common to all the individuals attacked, and when this character is found in the totality of the symptoms common to all, it guides us to the discovery of Homoeopathic (specific) remedy suitable for all the cases....”. Further Aphorism 100 to 102 also guide in the selection of Homoeopathic specific remedy for particular epidemic (*Genus epidemicus*). The physician must collect all the symptoms of several patients and select the Genus epidemicus of that epidemic [16, 17].

Dr. Andre Saine [18] shared his experience in treating 16 COVID-19 patients, in these, nine cases are confirmed positive and 7 are suspected but highly likely COVID-19. Five patients are from the USA, six are from Istanbul, and the rests are from other countries. The most common presentation of symptoms of this disease is fever, dry cough, sore throat, weakness, shortness of breath, headache, and body ache. Diarrhea, altered taste and smell, decreased appetite, and low back pain are also presented in few patients. Coryza is an uncommon symptom and presented in only one patient. In these sixteen patients, five patients developed pneumonia. All the patients were treated by individualized Homoeopathic remedy with positive recovery. Nine patients had co-morbidities viz., asthma, diabetes mellitus, hypertension, and cancer, and most of them are on chronic Homoeopathic or conventional medication. Five patients are in the susceptible age group. Due to suffering from chronic diseases, advanced age and

on chronic treatment, the patient's immune response was declined, in those cases, Homoeopathic medicine helped them to recover without any adverse effects. All these cases were received medicine in frequently repeated doses and continue for several weeks after the test become negative to prevent relapse of the illness. Based on these results, Dr. Saine had recommended Bryonia 30 or 200 potency as a homeoprophylaxis, and the repetition of the medicine depends according to the risk of exposure and sensitivity of the person.

Dr. Andre Saine also shared his experience of treating cases in a nursing home in Lyon, France. Residents are in the age group of 85 to 105 years old with severely mentally (i.e., dementia) or physically (i.e., quadriplegic) handicapped. All 120 residents were given Camphora 1M except two as a prophylaxis, eventually 40 got infected with the virus. *Byonia alba* was given initially to every one but symptoms got relapsed after 2 days when Bryonia was stopped. Nine persons died when symptoms relapsed with great intensity. After that individualized Homoeopathic medicine were given with recovery to all but two persons who died from pneumonia. Dr. Andre Saine found that the most useful remedies that have cured serious cases (desaturation requiring oxygen by mask up to 9 l/min) are *Carboneum oxygenisatum* (Carbon Monoxide) for asphyxic forms and *Hyoscyamus* for major confused forms. No death were reported after the introduction of *Carboneum oxygenisatum*. For the convalescence phase, he has suggested Kali carbonicum or Opium with positive effect.

Andrea Valeri [19], Italy, reported 50 symptomatic cases of COVID-19 treated with Homoeopathy. In her cases, all the patients are in home isolation and diagnosed positive or probable COVID-19. Out of 50 cases, 10 are confirmed and

40 are probably symptomatic patients, but semeiologically similar to confirmed cases. All the patients were treated with single individualized Homoeopathic medicine at a time. 50% of cases were required only single medicine to get rid of the disease, whereas the other 50% cases were treated with more than one medicine in series. There is no adverse event reported, with favorable recovery for all cases and no hospitalization were required for all patients treated with Homoeopathy. This paper didn't define the detailed symptomatology of any cases other than the common symptoms of COVID-19, which was the inclusion criteria for the patients who were not confirmed by diagnostic swab, they are, fever, weakness, dry cough, dyspnea, pharyngitis, chest pain, ageusia-anosmia, conjunctivitis and bone, and muscle pain.

Ka Lun Aaron To ^[20] a Homoeopathic physician from Hong Kong successfully treated 18 cases, with 16 cases are serologically positive and 2 are most likely positive cases. The author categorized the cases according to the outbreak cluster, where the patient is living. All the cases were prescribed individualized medicine after repertorization. Most frequently indicated medicine was *Gelsemium sempervirens*, which was indicated in 12 patients. *Bryonia alba* was the second most common medicine for 4 cases. Symptoms of the patients are more likely what described above in the case of patients treated by Andre Saine, but slow in onset. Followings are the differentiating symptoms of *Gelsemium sempervirens* on which medicine was prescribed, heaviness of eye lid, chilliness of back or beginning in back, constricted feeling of head, cold-wet weather aggravation, dry cough mainly in night and involuntary urination during cough.

Another Homoeopathic physicians, Dr. Aditya Kasariyans ^[21], Iran, and Dr. Rajan Sankaran, India conjointly enriches the further understanding of symptomatology of COVID-19 in the view of Homoeopathy. They have collected symptoms from more than 40 cases and treated successfully with Camphora. Followings are the additional symptoms noted by them, profuse perspiration, chilliness and sudden collapse or faintness. Based on sudden collapse, cold sweat, and a relative absence of restlessness Dr. Sankaran has suggested Camphor as medicine and prophylaxis.

Dr. Sara Diani ^[22] and Dr. Paolo Benedetti, Italy reported nine cases of COVID-19 and successfully treated with a single medicine Phosphorus. Initially, this medicine was given in 30th potency three times a day for the first two days once after major improvement noticed repetition was reduced to twice a day or once in a day continued up to complete recovery of the patients up to 4 to 5 days.

Dr. Pradeep Kumar Gupta ^[23], Principal, Naimi Nath Homoeopathic Medical College & Hospital, Agra, India, after approval from ICMR and Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India conducted a trial on 50 COVID-19 patients. The first batch of 25 was prescribed the approved set of allopathic drugs and homoeopathic pills, mainly *Bryonia alba*. The second batch of 25 was given allopathic drugs and a placebo. The first batch became symptom-free in two-three days and tested negative for covid-19 in six-seven days. The second batch needed three-five weeks to recover. Homoeopathic medicine is not only helpful in treating the patients suffering from COVID-19 but also can be used as prophylaxis by improving the immunity of the persons susceptible to get the infection from affected areas. The preventive aspect of Homoeopathy is elucidating since its

discovery and historically has proven in prevention during epidemics of Cholera, Spanish Influenza, Yellow fever, Scarlet fever, diphtheria, Typhoid, recently in Dengue and Chikungunya ^[4, 15, 24-26].

Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India recommended the medicine Arsenic Album 30 as an immunity booster to combat this disease ^[27]. A study conducted by Dr. Niraj Parikh ^[28] *et al.* 420 individuals in the containment zone were not affected with disease who consumed the Arsenic album 30 as a prophylactic whereas 1500 individuals are reported COVID-19 positive in the same area.

Ms. Jayanti Ravi ^[29], Principal Secretary (Health), Government of Gujarat given press report about 17,725 persons under quarantine were distributed the Arsenic Album 30 and only 15 cases become positive among them. Thomas M. V ^[30] *et al.* found that Arsenicum album 30 C is found effective for upregulating the immune markers (viz. CD4, CD3, CD8, CD4:CD8 ratio and absolute lymphocyte count) and there by maintaining the immunity of individuals with COVID-19 related subjective distress. Medicine was given consecutively for three days in morning. Changes in the level of immune markers were studied after five days of intervention.

Pandalam Municipality of Pathanamthitta District in Kerala given Arsenic album 30 to 107 individuals who came in direct contact with COVID-19 positive cases as per the letter issued by Pandalam Municipal Office on 18th July 2020. None of them affected and tested negative after consuming the Homoeopathic medicine.

Mandal Praja Parishad, Korukonda of East Godavari District in India issued a letter no B/17/2020 dated 20 July 2020 related to effectiveness of Arsenic album 30 as a immune booster. Medicine was distributed in 14 Gram Panchayats of Korukonda Mandal on 3rd and 4th June 2020. Eight persons from three families who didn't take the medicine were tested positive for the disease, whereas other family members of the same family who have taken Arsenic album didn't affected and tested negative even being primary contacts of this viral disease.

Apart from India, Cuba is the only country to officially explore homoeopathy as part of its covid-19 prevention, treatment and research protocol ^[23] Cuban government is exploring the efficacy of compound PrevengHo-Vir (A Homoeopathic medicine) for highly susceptible population as well as the general population of the country ^[31, 32].

Conclusion

Homoeopathy from the time of its inception contributed immensely to public health and epidemics are not the exception. It has a very rich history of combating, curtailing, and treatment of epidemic and pandemic diseases. Across the globe, several Homoeopathic practioners diligently recording and reporting their successful treated COVID-19 positive cases which represent the scope of Homoeopathic treatment in this newly emerging pandemic. These successful treatment can help in finding Genus Epidemicus which can act as a probable prophylaxis in the disease. As per the media report Naimi Nath Homoeopathic Medical College & Hospital, Agra has conducted RCT and reported positive results in this pandemic. Homoeopathic medicine works as an immuno-booster and shown its efficacy in upregulating the level of immune markers and there by effective in controlling the epidemic or pandemic. To show the more concrete evidence for homoeopathy as medicine or

prophylaxis in COVID-19 several rigorous randomized controlled trial is needed, which can only be possible if homoeopathic approach must be integrated with the modern medicine in the management of patients. More than evidence homoeopathic medicine will save the lives of millions if integrated with modern medicine in the treatment, what it has proved earlier on several occasions when needed.

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