

REVIEW ARTICLE



Homeopathy in dentistry: A review

Mahmoud Hoseinishad¹, Azam Nosratipour², Samineh Mozzaffar Moghaddam³, Amin Khajavi⁴

¹Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology, Faculty of Dentistry, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran, ²Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Disease Center, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran, ³Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Faculty of Dentistry, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran, ⁴Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Disease Center, School of Dentistry, Mashhad University of Medical Sciences, Mashhad, Iran

Correspondence

Dr. Samineh Mozzaffar Moghaddam,
Department of Oral and Maxillofacial
Surgery, Faculty of Dentistry, Mashhad
University of Medical Sciences,
Mashhad, Iran. Tel/Fax: +985138414499.
E-mail: Moghaddamsm@mums.ac.ir

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Abstract

Homeopathy is an alternative therapy that has been used over 200 years. Homeopathic remedies are used in dentistry to improve psychological or emotional condition of the patients. Although the proposed homeopathic remedies are not supported by systematic reviews, but many clinical trials and case-control studies have been published about the effectiveness of homeopathic remedies for oral and maxillofacial problems. This article reviews some of this homeopathic application in dentistry.

Keywords: Alternative therapy, dentistry, homeopathy

Introduction

Homeopathy is the alternative therapy that has been used over 200 years. It was presented for the first time by Samuel Hanemen (1755-1843), but its basic tents go back to Paracelsus and Hippocrates.^[1] Hanemen worked on the treatment of malaria and found that when a healthy person used the cinchona "a plant from which quinine was derived" symptoms of malaria appear. This was the advent of treatment which is in accordance with the energetic principles of healing.^[2] In modern medicine the symptom are the direct result of the disease and tries to suppress them but due to homeopathic concept the symptoms are the signs of bodies' effort to conquest disease and tries to reinforce and not to inhibit them. Homeopathy has a holistic view to health and believes that every disease has basic causes that the homeopathic remedies focus on them.^[1] The first Hanemen book "organon" was published on 1810. He introduced three laws as the basic principles of homeopathy including law of similarity, minimum dose and individuality.

Law of Similarity

One of the main principals in homeopathy is the rule of "like cure likes." Due to this law a substance like coffee which can cause insomnia can be used for the treatment of patients who suffered

from this problem. Homeopathy accentuate to symptoms more than the external causes of the disease. A remedy for a disease is a substance that develops similar symptoms. The actions of medicine are tested on healthy persons. These tests are called provings. Haneman tried different substances on him and other healthy volunteers and published a book named material medical.^[2]

Minimum Dose

Homeopathic drugs are product which be obtained from consecutive attenuation of a substance in alcohol or distilled water. This process called potentiation. Because of the substances are diluted they triggers the body's natural system of healing. Immunization is based on the law of similarity. The law of similarity is in accordance with the Arndt-Schulz law. Due to this law every drug in small doses has stimulating effect whereas this substance has an inhibitory effect on larger doses.^[3]

Individuality

In homeopathy, all of patient's symptoms are matched to a distinct remedy. The patients' symptoms are not only physical but also include the emotional and mental. The patients' traits

such as food preferences, temperature preferences, and other personal characteristics should be regarded. Hereupon with one remedy several problems can be cured.^[2]

Homeopathic Drugs

Homeopathic drugs are prescribed in two ways. One the prescription of a drug for a specific disease or chief complaint and another for an individual based on his or her temperament. Homeopathy is not in contrast with the modern medicine, but it can be used as an adjunctive therapy with them specifically for the diseases that conventional medicine were not effective for them or have adverse side effects.^[2]

Critics on Homeopathy

Homeopaths claimed that their drugs are much diluted and in such a concentration they have therapeutic effects and triggers natural healing. This principal is the most controversial law in homeopathy. After potentiation process no residue of original substance can be traced and after 12 decimal dilutions the water molecules just have a memory of original substance.^[3] This issue is the most controversial debate in homeopathy. The society of homeopaths (SOH) admits that scientifically it cannot yet be explained precisely that how homeopathy works. There is no high-quality evidence that homeopathy is effective, and its basic principles don't seem logical and have not the scientific supports. The proposed homeopathic remedies are not supported

by systematic reviews. Many believed that studies which referred prepared outdated and misleading documents and the effectiveness of these remedies might be due to placebo effect.^[4]

Homeopathic Organization

These are three homeopathic organization include SOH which provides registration for professional homeopaths has its code of ethics and practice,^[5] British homeopathic association which promote homeopathy practices by doctors and own other health care professionals^[6] and, Faculty of homeopaths which promotes academic and scientific development of homeopathy and ensures the highest standards in educational, training and practice of homeopathy.^[7] British Homeopathic Dental Association (BHDA) is the only organization works on the homeopathy in the field of dentistry. BHDA aims to promote the use of homeopathy within the dental profession and to advance the professional understanding of the subject. (The BHDA recommend that patients should try to find dentists who completed training by the FOH.^[8])

Homeopathic Applications in Dentistry

In dentistry, homeopathic remedies have been proposed for oral ulcers, sialorrhea, neuralgia, temporomandibular joint disorders, xerostomia, lichen plan, and bruxism. However, there is not enough evidence to support them. Different situations and relative homeopathic drugs are shown in Table 1.^[9-19]

Table 1: Remedies recommended for different conditions

Condition	Symptoms	Remedy	Prescription
Toothache		Chamomilla 200C	1 h before procedure-repeated every 15 min up to 6 doses
Delayed tooth eruption		Calc carb 30C	Twice a week
Apprehension/anxiety	Trepidation with lethargy	Gelsemium 30C	Morning and evening and 1 h before procedure
	Trepidation with hyperactivity	Arg.nit 30C	Morning and evening and 1 h before procedure
Reduction of scar formation after surgery		Thiosinamic 6C+silica 6C+arnica 6C+anagallis 6C+benzoic acid 6C	3 times daily for 5 days after surgery
Dry socket		Belladonna 30C	Every hour
		Coffea 30C	Every 15 min
		Hepar sulph 6C	Every 4 h
Abrasion (due to instrumentation and manipulation)		Hypericum and Calendula	Three times daily
Bleeding	Persistent-red bright	Phosphorus 30C	Every 15 min
	Persistent-dark blood	Lachesis 30C	Every hour
Trauma	Bruising or fracture, chronic problems	Arnica 30C	Three times daily
	Bruising or fracture, acute problems	Arnica 30C	Every hour up to 6 doses
	Nerve damage	Hypericum 30C	Every hour

Contd...

Table 1: Contd...

Condition	Symptoms	Remedy	Prescription
	Puncture wounds	Ledum 30C	Every hour
	Incisional wound	Staphysagria 15C	Every hour
	Sore jaws-improved by warmth	Mayphos 30C	Every hour
	Sore jaws-not improved by warmth	Arnica 30C	Every hour
Abcess	Initially with throbbing and mild	Belladonna 30C	Every half hour
	Halitosis, excessive salivation	Merc sol 6C	Every hour
	Obvious pus	Hepar sulph 6C	Every 2 h
	Swollo-numbness	Myristica 6X	Every hour
	Draining pus	Silica 6C	Twice daily
Aphthous ulcers	Nervous patient	Barox 30C	Every 4 h
	Foul breath, large tongue retains the imprint of teeth	Merc sol 30C	Every 4 h
	Yellow base, swollen uvula	Kalibich 30C	Every 4 h
	Bleeding base	Nit. Acid 30C	Every 4 h
Oral candidiasis		Borax 4X	Twice daily
		Sulphur 30C	Twice daily
Hypersalivation	During sleep	Baryta carbonica	
	Swollen gums that bleed easily	Phosphorus	
Xerostomia	Great thirst	Bryonia alba	
	No thirst	Pulsatilla	
Bruxism	During sleep	Cina 30C	1 h before sleep
	While awake	Nux vomica 30C	Three times a week
Gingivitis	Heavily coated tongue	Merc sol 30C	Three times daily
	Clean tongue	Nit. Acid 30C	Three times daily
	Destruction of tissue	Kali chlor 30C	Three times daily
Sore gums following scaling		Arnica 30C	Every 2 h
Halitosis		Carboveg 30C+Merc sol 30C	Every 2 h
Periodontitis	Bleeding gum, foul breath, large tongue	Merc sol 6C	One time daily
	Bleeding gum+substantial loss of bone	Phosphorus 15C	One time daily
TMJ dysfunction	Pain in joint on swallowing	Arum triphyllum	
	Hypermobile joint	Calcarea flourica	
	Pian in mouth opening	Calcarea phosphorica	
	Vertigo, nusea, tinnitus	Carbo vegetabilis	
	Low pain threshold, unbearable spasm of pain radiating to ear	Chamomilla	
	Trismus	Cuprum metallicum	
	Painful crack	Granatum	
	Pain radiating to ear, teeth, throat	Phytolacca decandra	
	Joint stiffness	Rhus toxicodendron	

TMJ: Temporomandibular joint

Constitutional Types

By examining person's craniofacial structures, we can define his or her constitutional type. Based on the theory of constitutional

typing by Nebel and Vannier. Skeletal and dental structures consist of three calcium salts or calcareas: Carbonate, phosphate, and fluoride. Each of these salts impregnates our teeth and bones

Table 2: Characteristics of different calcarea groups

Organ	Calcarea carbonica	Calcarea phosphoricum	Calcarea flouricum
Skeleton	Strong and thick	Fragile	Irregular, exostoses
Orofacial	Large, broad head, open fontanelles	Elongated head, open fontanelles	Asymmetrical head
Jaws and arches	Large elliptical	Narrow elongated, elliptical	V shaped, irregular
Vault (palate)	Low	Gothic	Narrow and very deep
Tooth eruption	Delayed and difficult dentition	Early but painful teething	Teeth erupt out of normal sequence
Teeth	White with broad stocky crowns, upper incisor flat and square, sensitive to cold	Yellow and long upper incisor, rectangular with curved facial surfaces	Grey white teeth, gum boils, sensitive to pressure and eating, looseness of teeth
Occlusion	Teeth well aligned	Often malposition in anterior teeth	Irregularly set into arches (forward and backward malposition)
TMJ	Strong and tight	Fine and slack	Hyper stretch

TMJ: Temporomandibular joint

and thereby is responsible for different anatomical characteristics and different metabolic types and different disease presentation. Every one belongs to one of these three constitutional types: Calcarea carbonica, calcarea phosphoricum and calcarea flouricum. Based on which salt predominates in our structures. While it is common to see individuals who exhibit combinations of these three constitutional types but one type will always be predominant.^[20]

Calcarea Carbonica

They had a broad forehead, large jaws, white and well-aligned teeth. Their teeth erupt slowly with difficult teething, and their tongue is dry. Their teeth are very sensitive to coldness. They don't like to talk and are very resistant to any change. They are logical and good with mathematics. Their bones, joints, and muscles are as rigid and inflexible as their opinions. They tend to develop hypertension, hypothyroidism, and obesity due to failure to remove toxins from the body and are prone to digestive complaints. The remedies prescribed to eliminate toxins are nat. em, kali carb, iodum, arsenicum album, phosphorous, stannum.

Calcarea Fluoricum

Their muscles and ligaments are very lax, producing a shape posture. Their bones are deformed. Their teeth are irregularly aligned, and they have maxillary protrusion. They have instability both mentally and physically, dislike exercise and have little physical endurance and cannot concentrate on anything for a long period of time. Their temperature is unstable. They have little control over their reactions and will say whatever is on their mind. They tend toward arteriosclerosis, arthritis, and hypertension. Their major remedies include mercurius, aurum metallicum, argentum nitricum, kali bichromicum, platina, nitricum acidum, baryta carbonica and syphilinum.

Calcarea Phosphoricum

They have long arms and legs. The skull is long (front to back) and narrow. The forehead is elevated and nose strong. The teeth

are ovate and have yellow cast to them. The palate is narrow with a gothic (high) vault. They are very imaginative and artistic and don't tolerate manual labor or any regularity in their life. They have long eyelashes. They tend toward hyperthyroidism, palpitation and tuberculosis.^[20]

The characteristics of three calcarea groups are shown in Table 2.

Conclusion

Homeopathy is an alternative therapy that seems to be effective in cases of treatment failure to conventional drugs. Because there isn't any strong evidence to support its remedies, a note of caution should be applied. Although homeopathy appears to be a physician's option for treatment of disease but more evidence is required to firmly establish the field of its use. We recommend more research be done to evaluate the effectiveness of homeopathic remedies for treatment of conditions that seem to be dependent on spiritual and mental conditions of patients or the conventional drugs just have an alleviative effect and poor response.

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