

## SCOPE OF HOMOEOPATHY IN THE TREATMENT OF VARIOUS PANDEMIC DISEASES

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### ABSTRACT

*Pandemic, is an epidemic of an infectious disease that spreads in large region, for instance multiple continents or worldwide, thus affecting a substantial number of people. Throughout human history, there have been a large number of pandemics like Cholera, Spanish flu, Ebola, etc. The Homoeopathic system of medicines is based upon the law of 'Similia, Similibus Curentur', which can be understood in hindi language as "जहर ही जहर को काटता है". That is 'the symptoms of the patient and the homoeopathic medicine should be similar' to cure the patient.*

**Keywords:** Homoeopathy, Pandemic, Cholera, Spanish Flu, Ebola.

### Introduction

Based on this principle, Homoeopathic system of medicine has always worked wonders in the treatment of epidemic and pandemic diseases. Since its inception in 1796, homeopathy has been used to treat various epidemic diseases. For example, Dr. Hahnemann published this work in the pamphlet of Cure and Prevention of Scarlet Fever in 1801. At that time he promoted homoeopathic medicine named as *Belladonna*, as a specific prophylactic remedy for Scarlet fever. In 1815, Hahnemann treated a total of 180 patients during a typhus outbreak in Leipzig, Germany. In 1831, he also described the use of homoeopathic medicines named *Camphora*, *Veratrum album* and *Cuprum metallicum* for the prevention and treatment of epidemic disease named Asiatic cholera in the German area. Other prophylactics recommended by Dr. Hahnemann were homoeopathic medicine named *Aconite napellus* for the treatment of *Purpura miliaris*, *Camphora officinalis* for *Asiatica cholera*, *Merc cyanatus* for *Diphtheria*, *Pulsatilla* for *measles*, etc. Thus, Homoeopathy has proved itself effective, several times in the history in the treatment of various epidemics and pandemics.<sup>1</sup>

Homoeopathic medicines for some pandemic diseases are as follows:

- Plague is an infectious disease, caused by *Yersinia pestis* bacteria, usually found in small mammals and also their fleas. The disease is transmitted between animals via their fleas and humans can be contaminated by the bite of these infected fleas or through direct contact with the infected materials, or by inhalation.<sup>2</sup> Three pandemics of plague have occurred till now, in 541, 1347, and 1894 CE respectively.<sup>3</sup>

It is of 3 main types i.e., Bubonic plague, Septicaemic plague and Pneumonic plague. People infected with plague usually develop influenza-like symptoms, after an incubation period of 3–7 days. Symptoms include fever, chills, aches, weakness, nausea and vomiting. Grevious symptoms include suppurating lymph nodes, lung infections or septicaemia. Common allopathic treatment of plague includes Antibiotics and supportive therapy.<sup>2</sup> However as homoeopathic treatment is based upon similarity of symptoms b/w patients symptoms and symptoms of the medicine, therefore there are many homoeopathic medicines of plague like:

### **Operculina Terpetum**

- It is a great remedy to cure plague epidemics and pandemics. For this medicine to be prescribed, the patient must show the symptoms like enlarged and indurated (hard) lymph nodes.
- Abscesses that suppurates slowly. Delirium may occur in patients, along with restlessness and loquacity. There is a tendency to escape from bed ; ravings, pains causes fainting.<sup>4</sup>

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**Ferrum Phosphoricum**

- **Fever:** Works great in the very first stage of fever, before exudation sets in, especially for the catarrhal affections of the respiratory tract. Patient is chilly, daily at 1 p.m. Great prostration and easy flushing of face. Pulse is soft and flowing.
- **Cough:** Congestion of lungs, with short, painful and tickling, hard and dry cough, with soreness of chest. Cough is better at night.<sup>5</sup>

**Belladonna**

- *Fever-* Sudden and violent onset of fever. Head is hot and painful. Face is red, flushed; eyes are wild, staring, pupils are dilated. Pulse is full, bounding, globular like a buckshot striking the finger. Mucus membrane of mouth is dry, stool is tardy, urine is suppressed. Patient is sleepy but cannot sleep.
- Heat is so much that it can be felt on as burning by the examining hand. The patient is not thirsty.
- Complaints become worse after 3 p.m., at night, draught of air, uncovering the head, least jar and motion, lying down.
- Amelioration of complaints occur by standing or sitting erect and in a warm room.<sup>6</sup>
- Cholera an acute diarrhoeal infection caused by eating or drinking food or water that is contaminated with the bacterium *Vibrio cholerae*.<sup>7</sup> Seven cholera pandemics have occurred in the past 200 years, with the first pandemic originating in India in 1817. Between 1816 and 1923, the first six cholera pandemics occurred consecutively and continuously. Increased commerce, migration, and pilgrimage are actually credited for its transmission. The seventh pandemic occurred in 1961.<sup>8</sup>

Cholera is an extremely serious disease that can even cause severe acute watery diarrhoea with severe dehydration. It takes between 12 hours and 5 days for a person to show symptoms, after consuming contaminated food or water. In allopathy, Oral cholera vaccines (OCV) is a tool that is used in addition to classic cholera control measures like sustainable safe water, sanitation, and hygiene.<sup>7</sup> In Homoeopathic system of medicine, many options i.e., many homoeopathic medicines are used to treat cholera like:

**Camphora**

- With this remedy the system seems overwhelmed by the violence of poisoning even before the vomiting and diarrhoea appear.
- There is at once intense weakness, bluish, icy cold face, cold body, weak, squeaky voice, coldness and collapse, stiffness of muscles, burning in stomach and oesophagus.
- Coldness, dryness and also blueness expresses its characteristics.
- The discharges are scanty, if present at all.
- The tongue is cold.
- It is almost an infallible remedy at the onset of cholera and was so considered by Dr. Hahnemann.
- It corresponds to a dry cholera, where the patient is taken simply with coldness, doesn't have the vitality to vomit and purge.

**Cuprum Metallicum**

- Intense spasms and cramps are marked in this remedy.
- There is coldness of the body surface, dryness of mouth, thirst, blueness of skin, cramps of the muscles of calves, violent pains in epigastrium and ineffectual efforts to vomit.
- It has vomiting and purging nearly as great as Veratrum, but not the cold sweat.
- Cramps are more prominent of Cuprum than that of any other remedy.
- It has also spasmodic twitching, and has been used as a prophylactic medicine.
- Everything is spasmodic, and it is indicated only when vomiting and purging has set in.
- In the chest the cramps produce dyspnoea, there are cramps in extremities, even in thumbs and fingers.

### Veratrum Album

- Violent vomiting with profuse diarrhoea and with a rapid sinking of the vital force.
- Vomiting: Excessive with nausea and also great prostration. Aggravation of the condition is by drinking, by least motion. Great weakness after vomiting.
- Cholera: Purging with vomiting. Stool is profuse watery, gushing, prostration. Cold sweat on forehead, during cholera.<sup>9</sup>

Spanish Flu which is caused by H1N1 virus of avian origin, and spread via respiratory route. The pandemic is conventionally marked as having begun from 4<sup>th</sup> March 1918, at Camp Funston in Kansas, United States. The second wave began in the second half of August, spreading to Boston and Freetown, Sierra Leone. In January 1919, a third wave of Spanish Flu hit Australia. In the spring of 1920, fourth wave occurred in New York, Switzerland, Scandinavia and some South American islands.

Majority of the infected, experienced only the typical flu symptoms of sore throat, fever and headache, especially during the first wave. However, it was often complicated by bacterial pneumonia, which many a times was the cause of death. This, more serious type would cause *heliotrope cyanosis* to develop, whereby the skin would first develop two mahogany spots over cheekbones which would then over a few hours spread to colour the entire face blue, followed by blackish discoloration first in the extremities and then further spreading to limbs and torso. After this, death would occur within hours or days. Other signs and symptoms reported, included spontaneous mouth and nose bleeds, miscarriages for pregnant females, a peculiar smell, teeth, and hair falling, delirium, dizziness, insomnia, loss of smell or hearing, blurred vision, and impaired color vision. As there were no antiviral drugs to treat the virus, and no antibiotics to treat secondary bacterial infections, doctors would rely on a randomised assortment of medicines with varying degrees of effectiveness, such as aspirin, quinine, arsenics, digitalis, strychnine, epsom salts, castor oil, and iodine.<sup>10</sup> Homoeopathic treatment for Spanish flu includes medicines like:

#### Aconite

- **Fever:** There is sudden onset of complaints. Complaints, caused by the exposure to dry cold air, draughts of cold air, while in perspiration.
- Skin is hot and dry; face is red or red and pale alternately. There is burning thirst for large quantity of cold water. There is intense nervous restlessness, Patient tosses about in agony, becomes intolerable towards evening and while going to sleep.
- Complaints become worse in evening and at night, pains are insupportable. In a warm room, while rising from bed and on lying on the affected side. Amelioration is in open air. 11

#### Arsenic

- Breathing difficulty, must sit or bend forward, spring out of the bed at night especially, after 12 O'clock. Unable to lie down, for fear of suffocation. Attacks of croup.
- Great prostration, with rapid sinking of vital force; fainting.
- High fever. Periodicity marked by adynamia. Septic fevers. Paroxysms incomplete, with a marked exhaustion. Cold sweat. Great heat around 3 a.m. Great restlessness. Delirium worse after midnight.
- Ulcers with offensive discharge. Icy coldness of body, Gangrenous inflammation.<sup>12</sup>

#### Lachesis Mutus

- **Skin:** A bluish and purplish appearance of skin. Hot perspiration. Ulcers and other skin eruptions with bluish- purple surroundings. Blue- Black surroundings. Pyaemia. Purpura with intense prostration. Cellulitis.<sup>13</sup>
- Severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS)- a viral respiratory disease caused by a SARS-associated coronavirus. SARS is an airborne virus and can spread through small droplets of saliva and fomites.<sup>14</sup> The 2003 outbreak of (SARS) shocked the world, as it spread swiftly from continent to continent, resulting in >8,000 infections, with approx 10% mortality.<sup>15</sup>

Incubation period is from 2-7 days, but may even be upto 10 days. The first symptom of the illness is generally fever, which is often high, and sometimes associated with chills and rigors. It may also be accompanied by other symptoms including headache, malaise, and muscle pain. At the onset of illness, some cases have mild respiratory symptoms. After 3-7 days, there is onset of a dry, non-

productive cough or dyspnoea (shortness of breath) that may reach upto hypoxemia (low blood oxygen levels). The WBCs count and platelet counts are decreased. According to allopathy, there is no cure and no vaccine for SARS and treatment should be supportive and based on the patient's symptoms.<sup>14</sup> However, in Homoeopathy there are multiple drugs like:

#### **Eupatorium Perfoliatum**

- Coryza, aching in every bone. Great prostration in epidemic influenza.
- *Fever*- Chill at 9 a.m one day, then at noon, the next day. Bitter vomiting at close of chill; drinking hastens chill and causes vomiting. Bone pains, before and during chill.
- Insatiable thirst, before and during chill and fever. He knows chill is coming, because he cannot drink enough.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Cedron**

- *Fever*: Regular paroxysms of fever, coming at same hour, commencing every day 6 p.m. by chills in back and limbs, or cold feet and hands. Chill 4 a.m., followed by sweat; at 4 p.m., after washing in cold water, chill alone. Shivering and chill followed by profuse perspiration, every evening.
- Frontal headache, extending to the parietal region. Eyes are red. Heat with itching in the eyes, tearing pain in limbs numbness of limbs.<sup>17</sup>

#### **Spongia Tosta**

- Cough is dry, sibilant, like a saw driven through a pine board. Everything is perfectly dry, no mucus rale. Worse from cold drink, sweet, smoking, lying with head low, dry cold winds, talking, swallowing, Amelioration by drinking warm things.
- Awakes from sleep in a fright and feels suffocating; as if he had to breathe through a sponge.
- Great dryness of the mucous membrane of air passages i.e., throat, larynx, trachea, bronchi- 'dry as a horn.'<sup>18</sup>
- Corona virus disease (COVID-19) - an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus. The first case was reported in China on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in the Hubei Province, but went unrecognized. 8 more cases appeared in December. It is ongoing till now.

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or from nasal discharge, when an infected person coughs or sneezes. On an average, it takes 5–6 days from when someone is infected with the virus for symptoms to show, however, it can take up to 14 days. COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most common symptoms include fever, dry cough, tiredness whereas less common symptoms include aches and pains, sore throat, diarrhoea, conjunctivitis, headache, loss of taste or smell, a rash on skin, discolouration of fingers or toes. However, serious symptoms include dyspnoea, chest pain or pressure, loss of speech or movement.<sup>19</sup> However homoeopathy (since it depends upon similarity of symptoms between patient's symptoms and symptoms of the medicines ) has a lot number of medicines to cure COVID-19 . These are as follows :

#### **Gelsemium Sempervirens**

- Fever with chill without thirst, especially along the spine, running up and down the back in rapid, wave like successions from sacrum to occiput.
- There is great heaviness of eyelids. Patient cannot keep them open.
- There is dullness, dizziness and drowsiness.
- General depression from heat of sun or summer.
- Weakness and trembling of entire body.
- Aggravating factors- Damp weather, before a thunderstorm, tobacco smoking, thinking of his ailments.<sup>20</sup>

#### **Bryonia Alba**

- There is excessive dryness of the mucous membrane of the entire body. Lips and tongue appears dry, cracked, parched.
- Great thirst for large quantities is markedly present.

- Cough is dry, hard, racking with scanty expectoration, with gagging and vomiting. Sticking pain in side of chest. Cough gets worse after eating or drinking anything, on deep inspiration and slightest motion.<sup>21</sup>

#### **Antimonium Tartaricum**

- Great sleepiness or irresistible inclination to sleep.
- *Face*- Cold, blue, or pale covered with cold sweat.
- *Lungs*- Asphyxia from mucus in bronchi.
- pneumonia and Icterus, especially of right lung.
- Complaints get worse in damp, cold weather, on lying down at night, at a change of weather, in spring and during warmth of room.<sup>22</sup>

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