

the conclusion that toxicity of optical isomers may be inhibited by homeopathic enantiomer preparations. These data were obtained with minimal or no pre-testing to determine optimal test solutions suggestive of a robust hypothesis. Inhibition of the excitotoxic neurotransmitter L-Glutamic acid with homeopathic preparations of D-Glutamic acid, indicates the latter may be of use for amelioration of symptoms of disturbances of mood. This is an example of hypothesis driven research using homeopathy. Potency chords seem more stable in action than simplexes.

The abstract presentation will touch on recent work summarized in the review article at <http://www.hindawi.com/ism/toxicology/2012/575292/>, and also point to some of the numerous scenarios where it may be possible and relevant to investigate action of enantiomers in homeopathy.

Assessment of a new decision support expert system in headaches cases

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Continuous advancements in Information and Communication Technologies along with the consequent massive adoption of *Web services provide today, exciting and effective decision support tools for many professions. The vital need for high levels of accuracy and effectiveness in homeopathic prescribing was the driving force behind the development of a new online expert system.*

VithoulkasCompass is a web-based decision support tool, designed to aid the homeopathic practitioner in finding the individual correct remedy, by inputting relevant symptoms. Calibration and refinement of the algorithms and mechanisms that lead to the proposal of the correct remedy by the expert system are the key areas of continuous, on-going research, always confirming new developments against a very large number of real world cases from the archives of the International Academy of Classical Homeopathy (IACH).

A statistical assessment of VithoulkasCompass expert system platform has been performed on chronic headache cases. The methodology included two phases.

1. It analysed the performance of the software on cases already solved by homeopathy experts (and specifically Professor's George Vithoulkas), comparing the remedy provided by the human expert with the corresponding proposal of the system.
2. It assessed the support that the software provides live – in front of the patient - on cases solved by less experienced homeopaths. This evaluation process is based on statistical analysis of success rates derived from the assessment of the follow up on patients' cases, according to the principles of classical homeopathy.

The first phase was initiated with the selection of successful cases from highly skilled expert homeopaths. Successful cases are cases where follow ups clearly indicate that the remedy acted curatively. After repertorisation of the cases an assessment process was performed on how accurately the proposed, software-generated remedies, successfully matched the human-prescribed remedies.

The second phase was about reviewing cases solved by homeopaths with the support of VithoulkasCompass expert system. After the initial input and the analysis of symptoms, a first set of proposed remedies was provided by the system. If the case was clear, the homeopath proceeded with the appropriate prescription. If the case was not clear, the differential analysis functions of the software were utilized in order to suggest symptoms not revealed by the patient and to finally single out the correct remedy. Along these lines, the contribution of the differential analysis function was also effectively assessed.

A team of scientists guided by Prof. Vithoulkas of the IACH and the Aegean University evaluated the results of the system and the curative effect of the consequent administered remedies.

Statistical analysis demonstrates that VithoulkasCompass expert system, has a very high accuracy in proposing appropriate remedies for treating patients suffering from chronic headaches, as well as showing high efficiency on individually prescribed homeopathic remedies, in many headache cases.

Homeopathic research in palliative care (PC) - A review of modern studies concerning the field of PC

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Introduction: Homeopathy, with a tradition of use without discontinuity in nearly all over the world longer than 200 years, stands as one of the complementary and alternative medicines (CAM) that could offer effective alternatives of treatment in palliative care, not yet fully explored or investigated. Observational studies support its use in the field of PC to reduce anxiety, depression, and to improve quality of life, also to reduce hot flashes and breathlessness.

Objectives and method: Review of indications and possibilities that homeopathic treatment offers in the field of PC from modern investigations, confirming somehow classical homeopathic authors tips. Review of bibliography of *Encyclopaedia Homeopathica*, review of summaries of searches in PubMed, Medline and Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews.

Results: Homeopathic treatment offers effective alternatives of symptoms control in several clinical situations that appear in persons at the end of life.

The review has been done for those clinical situations that have been studied with modern research methodology, after selection of the best studies and with more significant results, adding tips from classical homeopathic authors. Clinical situations selected are: -emergencies; -cancer; -prevention and treatment of iatrogenic oncological conventional treatment (radiotherapy, chemotherapy, surgery); -(oncological) pain; -infections; -digestive symptoms; -respiratory symptoms; -skin symptoms; -agony.

Conclusions: Homeopathy is an alternative/complementary therapeutics effective to relieve physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual suffering of the sick at the end of life; could reduce the necessary charge of conventional chemical medication, reducing its secondary effects and improving their tolerance, being of easy administration, without pharmacological interactions and with minimal secondary effects; contributes to the understanding of how patient lives the end of life and his needs; could improve quality of life and dignity of the patient at the end of life, diminishing the suffering; could improve probability of survival, and, when time is coming, quality of death (euthanasia).

Keywords: Homeopathy in palliative care; Palliative care; Terminal illness.

Usefulness of homeopathy in essential hypertension: an exploratory interventional trial

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Background: Hypertension has shown a significant increase in its prevalence not only in urban but also in rural population in India. Out of all hypertensive cases 85%-95% account for 'Essential hypertension', which is mostly attributed to genetic, psychological and environmental factors. Thus, there is need for a holistic approach for its treatment. Homeopathy with its holistic concept along with life style modifications can prove to be a better option. This observational study as a part of thesis during post graduation was taken up to examine the usefulness of homeopathic medicines with life style modifications in management of essential hypertension.

Objectives: The primary objective was to evaluate the role of homeopathic drugs in the management of essential hypertension. Secondary objective was to find out the cases which belong to 'Metabolic syndrome X' as per the clinical criteria of National Cholesterol Education Program (Adult Treatment Panel (ATP) III).

Methodology: An exploratory interventional trial was conducted at Dharam Kiran Govt. Homeopathic Hospital, Hyderabad from 2004-06. 30 cases were enrolled from the OPD of the hospital. Patients fulfilling the inclusion criteria

were enrolled in the study after receiving written informed consent. Medical history, physical examination, laboratory investigations were used to rule out Secondary hypertension. Detailed case history was recorded as per the standard case recording format and cases were repertorized using suitable repertory. Final selection of the medicine for each case was done in consultation with homeopathic Materia medica. Modifiable risk factors like obesity (Body Mass Index), excess salt intake, alcohol consumption etc. were recorded at baseline.

The cases with Stage II hypertension as per Joint National Committee on prevention, detection, evaluation and treatment of high blood pressure VII report (JNC VII) were followed up every 15 days and cases with Stage I hypertension were followed every one month till one year. Improvement status was assessed considering changes in staging according to JNC VII report and improvement in general condition. Main outcome measure was to assess the change in blood pressure in Stage I and II hypertension cases and secondary outcome was to find cases that belong to 'Metabolic syndrome X'. Data was analyzed by using statistical software SPSS version 16.

Results: 16 (53.33%) cases showed marked improvement, 8 (26.67%) cases improved moderately, 3 (10%) showed no improvement and 3 (10%) cases dropped out. *Arsenic album*, *Natrum muraticum*, *Nux vomica*, *Causticum* and *Lycopodium* were found useful in the management of essential hypertension. Wilcoxon's signed rank test was used to analyze the data. The difference in values for both systolic and diastolic blood pressures before and after treatment were found statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Clinical presentation of essential hypertension as Metabolic syndrome X was present in 46.67% of the cases.

Conclusion: This study found that the constitutional treatment based on homeopathic principles offers the best therapeutic solution in the management of essential hypertension. Further well designed studies should be taken up to establish the efficacy of homeopathy in management of essential hypertension.

Keywords: Essential hypertension; Metabolic syndrome X; Obesity; Body Mass Index; Homeopathy

"IT'S THE CONSULTATION, STUPID!" ...ISN'T IT?' Complementarity and the shortcomings of RCTs

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