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RESEARCH ARTICLE

SCOPE OF HOMOEOPATHY IN THE TREATMENT OF DEPRESSION

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ABSTRACT

Background: Depression is a mental health condition that involves persistent sadness, loss of interest, and changes in thoughts, behaviors, and feelings, significantly impacting daily life. While depression is a real illness with available treatments like psychotherapy and medication, seeking help from a medical or mental health provider is crucial for diagnosis. According to the homoeopathic concept, physical disease can make changes in the mental/emotional state and vice versa. It attempts to go to the core of the disease in each individual patient. Research suggests that a mixture of genetic, biological, environmental and psychological factors play a role in depression. Depression can occur along with other serious diseases, such as diabetes, cancer, heart disease and Parkinson's disease.¹¹ Depression can make these conditions worse and vice versa. Sometimes, medications taken for these diseases may cause side effects that lead to depression symptoms.¹² A systematic analysis of the global burden of disease study from 2007 to 2017 estimated that depressive disorders along with low back pain and headache disorders are the three leading causes of years lived with disability (YLD). Between 1990 and 2007, the number of all-age YLDs attributable to depressive disorders increased by 33.4%. A meta-analysis of prospective cohort studies indicates that insomnia is significantly associated with an increased risk of depression. Research has also identified other risk factors for depression like cognitions and cognitive processes; stressors; certain sociodemographic factors, such as being female; parental depression and certain traits, behaviour patterns and dispositions. Dr Samuel Hahnemann (1796–1843), founder of Homoeopathy, was a pioneer in the diagnosis and classification of mental diseases. He advocated humane treatment for mental illness. He opposed the practice of chaining mental patients and granted respect to them which was revolutionary at its time.¹³ Homoeopathy states that the body and mind are integrated. According to the homoeopathic concept, physical disease can make changes in the mental/emotional state and vice versa. It attempts to go to the core of the disease in each individual patient. The 'totality of symptoms' in an individual patient comprises all changes observable on physical as well as mental/emotional sphere. A homoeopathic 'similimum' is the medicine that matches the totality of the patient's physical and mental/emotional symptoms, irrespective of which came first.¹⁴ **Objectives:** To find out effectiveness of homoeopathy in treatment of depression. **Materials and Methods:** 30 cases with features of depression were considered for the study. : A study was done to evince the scope of homoeopathic medicines in the treatment of depression. Searches were done in both general and specialised databases. The data were collected from peer-reviewed journals published between January 2001 and January 2021.. Necessary investigations were done. Prescription was done with reference to standard text books of Materia Medica. Dose, frequency and repetition was based on subjects susceptibility. Assessment and evaluation was done after 4 months with HAM-D. **Result:** All the cases selected for the study showed good prognosis and the cases improved within a time period of 4 months. Even though the time taken for improvement varied, all the cases selected for the study showed good prognosis and the cases improved within a time period of 4 months. **Conclusion:** A course of Homoeopathic treatment is associated with significant benefits in patients with features of depression, as measured by HAM-D scale.

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INTRODUCTION

Depression is a complex mental health condition characterized by persistent sadness, loss of interest, and changes in thoughts, behaviors, and feelings, significantly impacting daily life. It is essential to acknowledge that depression is a real illness with available treatments like psychotherapy and medication, and seeking help from a medical or mental health provider is crucial for diagnosis.

The Interconnectedness of Physical and Mental Health: Homoeopathy, founded by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, recognizes the interconnectedness of physical and mental/emotional states. This system aims to address the root cause of the disease, considering the totality of symptoms in each individual patient. According to the homoeopathic concept, physical disease can influence mental/emotional state and vice versa, highlighting the importance of a holistic approach.

Risk Factors and Co-Morbidities: Research suggests that depression is influenced by a mix of genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological factors. It often co-occurs with other serious diseases like diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and Parkinson's disease, worsening each other's conditions. Additionally, certain medications can cause side effects that lead to depression symptoms.

Some notable risk factors for depression include

- Insomnia
- Cognitions and cognitive processes
- Stressors
- Sociodemographic factors (e.g., being female)
- Parental depression
- Certain traits, behavior patterns, and dispositions

The Burden of Depression: A systematic analysis of the global burden of disease study (2007-2017) estimated that depressive disorders are one of the leading causes of years lived with disability (YLD). Between 1990 and 2007, the number of all-age YLDs attributable to depressive disorders increased by 33.4%.

Homoeopathic Approach to Depression: Homoeopathy offers a unique approach to treating depression, focusing on the individual's totality of symptoms. A homoeopathic 'similimum' is the medicine that matches the patient's physical and mental/emotional symptoms, irrespective of which came first. This approach acknowledges the complex interplay between physical and mental health, providing a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing depression. By recognizing the interconnectedness of physical and mental health, homoeopathy provides a valuable treatment option for individuals struggling with depression.

OBJECTIVES

To find out effectiveness of homoeopathy in treatment of depression

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of homoeopathic medicines in treating depression. The study involved 30 cases with features of depression, and the methodology is outlined below:

Inclusion Criteria

- Patients diagnosed with depression
- Age: Adult Above 18 Years
- Sex: Both the Genders

Data Collection

- Searches were conducted in both general and specialized databases
- Data were collected from peer-reviewed journals published between January 2001 and January 2021

Investigations

- Necessary investigations were done to confirm the diagnosis and rule out other underlying conditions

Treatment Protocol

- Prescription was done with reference to standard textbooks of Materia Medica
- Dose, frequency, and repetition of homoeopathic medicines were based on individual subject's susceptibility

Assessment and Evaluation

- Assessment and evaluation were done after 4 months using the Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HAM-D)
- HAM-D is a widely used scale to assess the severity of depression symptoms

Outcome Measures

- The primary outcome measure was the change in HAM-D scores after 4 months of homoeopathic treatment
- The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of homoeopathic medicines in reducing depression symptoms
- By using a systematic approach and standardized assessment tools, the study aimed to provide insights into the effectiveness of homoeopathic treatment for depression.
- Study Results

The study yielded promising results, with all 30 cases showing significant improvement in depression symptoms within a period of 4 months.

Key Findings

- All cases showed good prognosis, indicating a positive response to homoeopathic treatment
- Improvement was observed in all cases, despite varying timeframes for individual patients
- The study suggests that homoeopathic treatment can be an effective approach in managing depression symptoms

Outcome Analysis

- The Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HAM-D) scores indicated a significant reduction in depression symptoms after 4 months of homoeopathic treatment
- The results suggest that homoeopathic medicines can help alleviate depression symptoms, leading to improved overall well-being

Implications

- The study's findings support the use of homoeopathy as a complementary or alternative approach in treating depression
- The results highlight the importance of individualized treatment and the potential benefits of homoeopathic medicines in addressing depression symptoms

By demonstrating the effectiveness of homoeopathic treatment in reducing depression symptoms, this study contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the use of homoeopathy in mental health care.

CONCLUSION

The study's findings provide evidence that a course of homoeopathic treatment can lead to significant benefits in patients with depression, as measured by the Hamilton Rating Scale for Depression (HAM-D). The results indicate that homoeopathy can be a valuable approach in managing depression symptoms, offering a potential alternative or complement to conventional treatments.

Key Implications

- Homoeopathic treatment can be an effective strategy for alleviating depression symptoms
- Individualized homoeopathic treatment can improve overall well-being and quality of life
- Homoeopathy may offer a valuable addition to conventional treatments for depression

Future Directions

- Further research is needed to confirm these findings and explore the mechanisms underlying homeopathy's effects on depression
- Larger, controlled studies can help establish homeopathy's efficacy and safety in treating depression
- Integration of homeopathy into mainstream mental health care may provide patients with more comprehensive treatment options

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