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A case series on homoeopathic management of palmoplantar dermatitis

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Abstract

Palmoplantar dermatitis is an intensely pruritic condition associated with dryness, painful fissures, and scaling of palms or soles or both. A case series of ten cases of Palmoplantar dermatitis treated with individualised homeopathic medicine with photographic evidence over 1 year of follow up is presented. Assessment and reassessment of cases was done using Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) for itching and distress and Dermatology Quality of Life (DLQI). All patients had significant relief after homoeopathic treatment with no relapse or recurrence after one year of follow up. The indicated medicine were *Lachesis*, *Arsenic album*, *Lycopodium*, *Sulphur*, *Psorinum*, *Calcarea carb*, *Nux vomica*, *Sepia*, *Natrum mur* and *Staphysagria*.

Keywords: Palmoplantar dermatitis, Homeopathic individualization, Homeopathic medicine, VAS

Introduction

Palmoplantar dermatitis eczema affects the palms and soles and is characterized by onset of intense itching, redness, dryness, scaling and fissuring and pain which sometimes leads to lichenification of the skin. In addition to significant morbidity, due to involvement of hands and soles, it contributes to significant loss of working hours. It is one of the commonest medical consultations and usually a relapsing condition requiring long treatments. Hot and dry climate predisposes to development of hand and foot eczema [1, 2]. The course of dermatitis can occur at intervals of 4 to 5 weeks, for months or years, or at longer irregular intervals [2]. Over course of time, it may become severe enough and disabling for many of patients. The differential diagnosis includes psoriasis, dermatophyte infection, pompholyx [2, 3].

In addition this condition interferes with the social life and work of the patient causing embarrassment and emotional distress and producing a poor quality of life (QoL) [4].

Management of a case of Palmoplantar dermatitis (PPD) involves identifying and avoiding the causative factor or irritant by a comprehensive screening. General management includes applying greasy ointments, such as petroleum jelly, which helps to repair and maintain the skin's barrier is essential [1-4].

Homeopathy is widely opted by patients especially for dermatological disorders. Consideration of response to Homeopathic treatment should include not only the improvement of the skin condition, but also an evaluation of the patient as a whole.

A case series of ten cases of PPD treated with homoeopathic medicines is presented. The cases reported in the OPD of Dr. Madan Pratap Khunteta Homoeopathic Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre between July 2017 and June 2018. Each case had undergone a thorough case taking and case processing. Medicine selection was done after repertorisation and due consultation with materia medica. The indicated medicine was initially prescribed in single dose of 200th centesimal potency in medicated globule form. Assessment and reassessment of cases was done using Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) for itching and distress and Dermatology Quality of Life (DLQI) [5]. (Table 1-20 and figures 1-10). Each case was followed up at an interval of 15 days to evaluate changes. Repetition of dosage and change of medicine/potency was done as per homoeopathic principles. The case series comprises of 5 male and 5 female patients within the age group of 28 to 45 years. Patients were regularly followed-up during treatment for an year.

Case 1

A 36 year old female patient presented with dryness and cracks of skin over bilateral palms and soles with burning pain in deep cracks and violent itching since 4 years. Burning pains <after scratching and after sleep. She is talkative with known people and highly religious, Holds her

anger and does not react easily in front of others, conscientious about her duties. Menses were regular. Desire for sweets, thirst often for small quantity of water in sips. *Lachesis* 200 one dose followed by *phytum* 30/tds for 15 days was prescribed after case processing, repertorisation and due consultation with Materia medica.

Table 1: Observations and prescriptions: Case report 1

Date	Changes in signs and symptom	Treatment
26/9/2017	Dryness and roughness in skin-same Burning pain < by scratching, night-slightly reduced Itching and cracks in skin-reduced	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/15 days
10/10/2017	Dryness and roughness in skin-same Burning pain < by scratching, night-slightly reduced Itching and cracks in skin-reduced	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/15 days
25/10/2017	Dryness and roughness in skin-same as before Burning pain < night slight- again started Itching and cracks in skin-reappeared	<i>Lachesis</i> 200/ 1 dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
15/11/2017 to 5/3/2018	Dryness and roughness in skin-better Burning pain <by scratching, night-slightly reduced Itching and cracks in skin-reduced	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds
6/3/2018	Dryness and roughness in skin-reappeared Burning pain < night slight present Itching and cracks in skin reappeared	<i>Lachesis</i> 1M/ 1 dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
13/3/2018/ upto 19/9/2018	Dryness and roughness in skin better Burning pain < night - relieved Itching and cracks -relieved	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds

Table 2: Pre and Post VAS & DLQI scores of case report 1

Scale score	Before treatment	After treatment
VAS score (itching)	8	1
VAS score (distress)	8	2
DLQI score	14	5



Case 1 A: Before treatment (palms) (12/9/2017)



Case 1 B: After treatment (palms) (19/9/2018)



Case 1 C: Before treatment (soles)



Case 1 D: After treatment (soles)

Fig 1: Photographs of patient before and after treatment of Case report 1

Case 2

A 41 year old male patient, presented with complaints of cracks over bilateral palms and soles with dry skin and intense itching especially during night. Prefers company of

known person, anxiety about disease and restless while doing any work. Generalized perspiration, offensive odor. Chilly patient. Thirst for large quantities of water. On the basis totality of symptoms, *Arsenic album* 200 single dose

followed by *Phytum 30tds/15 days* was prescribed on first visit (24/7/2017). Gradually patient's symptoms improved but relapsed again after 6 month so potency was raised to

Arsenic album 1M followed by *Phytum 30tds*, symptoms improved and his anxiety was also better. Any relapse in condition thereafter was not reported.

Table 3: Observations and prescriptions: Case 2

Date	Changes in signs and symptom	Treatment
7/8/2017 to 3/9/2017	Dryness in skin reduced. Itching in skin< night reduced. Cracks b/l palms and soles reduced.	<i>Phytum 30tds/ 15 days</i>
4/9/2017	Dryness in skin reappeared. Itching in skin< night-reappeared as previous. Cracks b/l palms and soles-present.	<i>Arsenic album 200/1dose</i> <i>Phytum 30tds/ 15 days</i>
18/9/2017 to 1/1/2018	Dryness of skin -relieved. Itching in skin< night reduced. Cracks b/l palms and soles relieved.	<i>Phytum 30tds/</i>
2/1/2018	Dryness of skin again present. Itching of skin< night reappeared as previous. Cracks b/l palms and soles present, worse than before.	<i>Arsenic album 1m/1dose</i> <i>Phytum 30tds/ 15 days</i>
29/1/2018 upto 30/7/2018	Dryness of skin relieved Itching of skin< night reduced Cracks b/l palms and soles relieved	<i>Phytum 30tds/</i>

Table 4: Pre and Post VAS & DLQI scores of Case 2

Scale score	Before treatment	After treatment
VAS score (itching)	7	1
VAS score (distress)	6	1
DLQI score	11	3



Case 2 A: Before treatment (24/7/2017)



Case 2 B: After treatment (palms) (30/7/2018)



Case 2 C: Before treatment (soles)



Case 2 D: After treatment (soles)

Fig 2: Photographs of patient before and after treatment of Case 2

Case 3

A 32 year-old male patient presented with dryness of skin with cracks over bilateral palms and soles since 2 years associated with itching and burning pain on continuous scratching. His appetite was good and cannot remain empty stomach for long period, flatulence and heaviness of abdomen after eating, desire for warm food and perspiration

on forehead and thermal reaction of patient was hot. Seems to be always sad and depressed with his complaints. Considering totality of patient *Lycopodium 200* one dose followed by *phytum30/ tds/15 days* was prescribed on first visit (8/2/2018). Gradually patient's general condition with skin symptoms improved without relapse.

Table 5: Observations and prescriptions: Case report 3

Date	Changes in signs and symptom	Treatment
22/2/2018 to 13/6/2018	Dryness of skin- reduced Cracks over bilateral palms and soles reduced. Itching and burning pain < on continuous scratching reduced.	<i>Phytum 30tds</i>

14/6/2018	Dryness of skin- present Cracks over bilateral palms and soles reappeared. Itching and burning pain <on continuous scratching reappeared.	<i>Lycopodium</i> 200/ dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
28/6/2018 upto 7/2/2019	Dryness of skin better. Cracks over bilateral palms and soles relieved Itching and burning pain<on continuous scratching relieved.	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds

Table 6: Pre and Post VAS & DLQI scores of Case Report 3

Scale score	Before treatment	After treatment
VAS score (itching)	8	2
VAS score (distress)	6	2
DLQI score	12	4



Case 3 A: Before treatment (palms) (8/2/2018)



Case 3 B: After treatment (palms) (7/2/2019)



Case 3 C: Before treatment (soles)



Case 3 D: After treatment (soles)

Fig 3: Photographs of patient before and after treatment of Case report 3

Case 4

A 45 year-old male patient presented with rough, dry cracked skin over bilateral palms since 3 years with intense itching that must be scratched. Scratching to the point of bleeding, worse from warmth of the bed, heat and better by cold application. Cracks over palms appeared after paralysis of his wife. Desire for sweets and offensive perspiration. Appearance of patient was messy, and he

was stingy before doing any work and even for small investment discusses a lot to other people for opinion. After considering totality of patient *Sulphur* 200 single dose followed by *phytum* 30/tds/15 days was prescribed on first visit (3/3/2018). Gradually itching and burning subsided and patient improved symptomatically.

Table 7: Observations and prescriptions: Case report 4

Date	Changes in signs and symptom	Treatment
19/3/2018 to 13/5/2018	Dryness of skin reduced. Cracks over b/l palms reduced. Itching and burning pain <on continuous scratching reduced, warmth of bed, better by cold application reduced.	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds
14/5/2018	Dryness of skin- present. Cracks over b/l palms reappeared. Itching and burning pain <on continuous scratching reduced, warmth of bed, better by cold application reduced reappeared.	<i>Sulphur</i> 200/ dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
28/5/2018 upto 16/9/2018	Dryness of skin reduced. Cracks over b/l palms relieved. Itching and burning pain <on continuous scratching reduced, warmth of bed, better by cold application reduced.	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds
17/9/2018	Dryness of skin present. Cracks over b/l palms reappeared. Itching and burning pain <on continuous scratching reduced, warmth of bed, better by cold application present.	<i>Sulphur</i> 200/ dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/15 days
1/10/2018 upto 12/3/2019	Dryness of skin better Itching and burning pain occasionally present Cracks over b/l palms relieved	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds

Table 8: Pre and Post VAS & DLQI scores of Case Report 4

Scale score	Before treatment	After treatment
VAS score (itching)	8	2
VAS score (distress)	8	2
DLQI score	9	3



Case 4 A: Before treatment (palms) (5/3/2018)



Case 4 B: After treatment (palms) (12/3/2019)

Fig 4: Photographs of patient before and after treatment of Case report 4

Case 5

42 year old male presented with dry, scaly cracked skin over bilateral palms since 6years with intense itching and stinging, burning pain after scratching symptoms worse at night and change of weather. Offensive perspiration with offensive breath from mouth and thermal reaction of patient was chilly. Religious and

sensitive to criticism and hopeless for recovery, as he had already taken other treatment without any relief in symptoms. Homoeopathic medicine *Psorinum 200/one dose* followed by *phytum 30/tds* was prescribed on first visit (6/11/2017). Patient improved symptomatically and quality of life also improved markedly.

Table 9: Observations and prescriptions: Case report 5

Date	Changes in signs and symptom	Treatment
20/11/2017 to 10/6/2018	Dryness of skin reduced. Cracks over b/l palms reduced. Itching and burning pain <on continuous scratching reduced.	<i>Phytum 30/tds</i>
11/6/2018	Dryness of skin again present. Cracks over b/l palms reappeared. Itching and burning pain <on continuous scratching reappeared.	<i>Psorinum 200/ dose</i> <i>Phytum 30/tds/ 15 days</i>
25/6/2018 upto 12/11/2018	Dryness of skin better Cracks over b/l palms relieved. Itching and burning pain on continuous scratching relieved.	<i>Phytum 30/tds</i>

Table 10: Pre and Post VAS & DLQI scores of Case Report 5

Scale score	Before treatment	After treatment
VAS score (itching)	8	2
VAS score (distress)	4	2
DLQI score	11	4



Case 5 A: Before treatment (palms) (6/11/2017)



Case 5 B: After treatment (palms) (12/11/2018)

Fig 5: Photographs of patient before and after treatment of Case report 5

35 year old female presented with dry, rough unhealthy skin with cracks over bilateral palm and sole since 6 year with severe itching wants to scratch all the time. Complaints started after her marriage as she was not having good bonding with husband and in-laws, even after marriage she was living with her parents, her father always supported her in all circumstances. Her husband shifted with her later, as they were financially stronger. After death of parents she felt helpless and lonely as she lost her financial support. Since then she suffered from chronic headache and used

to take painkiller for relief, gradually she started developing skin symptoms. Constipation with marked perspiration on head. Avoid dark places, disturbed sleep due to itching and sensitive to cold air, feel drowsiness during daytime. Considering patient’s totality *Calcarea carb* 200 one dose followed by *phytum* 30/tds/15 days was prescribed on first visit (27/7/2017). After fifteen days got relief in headache and itching. In-between symptoms aggravated so *Calcarea carb* 1m followed by *phytum* 30/tds was prescribed, gradually patient symptomatically improved.

Table 11: Observations and prescriptions: Case report 6

Date	Changes in signs and symptom	Treatment
10/8/2017 to 8/11/2017	Dryness of skin- reduced. Itching and burning pain of skin- reduced. Cracks b/l palm and sole reduced. Headache better	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds
9/11/2017	Dryness of skin reappeared Itching and burning pain of skin reappeared as previous Cracks b/l palm and sole present	<i>Calcarea carb</i> 200/ 1dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
22/2/2018 to 16/5/2018	Dryness of skin relieved Itching and burning pain of skin- reduced Cracks b/l palm and sole relieved	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/
17/5/2018	Dryness of skin again present Itching and burning pain of skin reappeared as previous Cracks b/l palm and sole present, worse than before. Headache same as before	<i>Calcarea carb</i> 1m/1dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
31/5/2018 upto 19/7/2018	Dryness of skin relieved Itching of skin- reduced Cracks b/l palm and sole relieved Headache better Patient’s symptoms was better	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/

Table 12: Pre and Post VAS & DLQI scores of Case Report 6

Scale score	Before treatment	After treatment
VAS score (itching)	8	2
VAS score (distress)	8	3
DLQI score	12	5



Case 6 A: Before treatment (palms) (27/7/2017)



Case 6 B: After treatment (palm) (19/7/2018)



Case 6 C: Before treatment (sole)



Case 6 D: After treatment (sole)

Fig 6: Photographs of patient before and after treatment of Case report 6

Case 7

30 year old male patient presented with dry cracked scaly rough skin over b/l palm since 2 years. Itching especially in morning. 2 years back he had joined as accountant at a new workplace. He was not satisfied his job, anxious for future and easily angered over

small issues, reacts on others on small mistakes, stress due to prolonged office work and wants to achieve best position in office. His appetite was normal, constipation with hard dry stools. Eructations after meal and desire for spicy and oily food. Sensitive

to cold. Topical steroidal applications were applied for years over lesions with no relief. *Nux vomica* 200/one dose followed by *Phytum* 30/tds for 15 days on first visit (7/3/2018) was prescribed, without any relapse gradually patient improved markedly.

Table 13: Observations and prescriptions: Case report 7

Date	Changes in signs and symptom	Treatment
21/3/2018 to 1/6/2018	Dryness of skin reduced Cracks over b/l palm reduced Itching < morning reduced.	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds
2/6/2018	Dryness of skin reappeared. Cracks over b/l palm reappeared. Itching < morning reappeared.	<i>Nux vomica</i> 200/ dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
20/6/2018 upto 9/3/2019	Dryness of skin better. Cracks over b/l palm relieved. Itching < morning occasionally present.	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds

Table 14: Pre and Post VAS & DLQI scores of Case Report 7

Scale score	Before treatment	After treatment
VAS score (itching)	8	2
VAS score (distress)	7	2
DLQI score	10	3



Case 7 A: Before treatment (palm) (7/3/2018)

Case 7 B: After treatment (palm) (9/3/2019)

Fig 7: Photographs of patient before and after treatment of Case report 7

Case 8

28 year old female presented with dryness of skin with cracks over b/l palm and sole since 3year with itching worse open air and scratching. Complaints started after her marriage as her husband was busy all the time in business, dominating, doesn't listen to her at all. She started keeping herself occupied with household work.

Appetite normal, desire for sweets, constipation, hard stools. Menses were regular. On totality of symptom patient received the Homeopathic medicine *Sepia* 200/ one dose followed by *Phytum* 30/tds on first visit (12/2/2018). Patient improved markedly both in domain of skin symptoms and QoL.

Table 15: Observations and prescriptions: Case report 8

Date	Changes in signs and symptom	Treatment
26/2/2018 to 27/5/2018	Dryness of skin- reduced. Itching in skin<open air, by scratching reduced. Cracks b/l palm and sole reduced. Stools- soft and satisfactory	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds
28/5/2018	Dryness of skin reappeared Itching of skin reappeared as previous Cracks b/l palm and sole present Stool- hard stools on and off	<i>Sepia</i> 200/ 1dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
11/6/2018 to 6/8/2018	Dryness of skin relieved Itching of skin- reduced Cracks b/l palm and sole reduced	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/
20/8/2018	Dryness of skin again present Itching of skin reappeared as previous Cracks b/l palm and sole reappeared	<i>Sepia</i> 1m/1dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
3/9/2018 upto 4/3/2019	Dryness of skin relieved Itching of skin relieved Cracks b/l palm and sole relieved Patient's symptoms was better Stools- satisfactory	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/

Table 16: Pre and Post VAS & DLQI scores of Case Report 8

Scale score	Before treatment	After treatment
VAS score (itching)	6	1
VAS score (distress)	5	2
DLQI score	13	5



Case 8 A: Before treatment (palm) (12/2/2018)



Case 8 C: after treatment (sole)



Case 8 B: Before treatment (sole)

Fig 8: Photographs of patient before and after treatment of Case report 8

Case 9

38 year old female patient presented with dry rough cracked skin over bilateral palm and sole since 2 years with intense itching relieved by scratching. Burning pain after continuous scratching. Complaints started after her husband had a failure in business with major loss. Sensitive to rudeness as her husband frequently expresses his irritation over her, also worried for children future, felt being neglected from husband. Desire for bread, and salty things, thirst for small sips of water and sensitive to hot weather. She usually get headache from sun exposure. Homeopathic medicine *Natrum muriaticum* 200/one dose followed by *phytum* 30/tds/15days was prescribed on first visit (3/1/2018), gradually skin symptom were relieved without any relapse.

Table 17: Observations and prescriptions: Case report 9

Date	Changes in signs and symptom	Treatment
17/1/2018 to 5/6/2018	Dryness of skin reduced. Itching and cracks over bilateral palm and sole reduced. Burning pain < by scratching reduced.	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds
6/6/2018	Dryness of skin present. Itching and cracks over bilateral palm and sole reappeared. Burning pain < by scratching reappeared.	<i>Natrum mur</i> 200/ 1dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
20/6/2018 upto 23/1/2019	Dryness of skin reduced. Itching and cracks over bilateral palm and sole reduced. Burning pain < by scratching reduced.	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds

Table 18: Pre and Post VAS & DLQI scores of Case Report 9

Scale score	Before treatment	After treatment
VAS score (itching)	8	2
VAS score (distress)	6	2
DLQI score	12	4



Case 9 A: Before treatment (palm) (3/1/2018)



Case 9 B: After treatment (palm) (23/1/2019)



Case 9 C: Before treatment (sole)

Case 9 D: After treatment (sole)

Fig 9: Photograph of patient before and after treatment Case 10

28 year old female patient presented with dry rough cracked skin over b/l palm and sole since 3 year, itching and burning pain on scratching. Complaints started after arguments with mother-in-law as she was dominating. Anxiety all the time for health and household work, Sensitive especially to what others might be thinking or saying about her, and suppressed feeling with of

humiliation feeling by mother-in law’s behavior. Occasional outburst of anger. Desire for spicy food, thirst less and sensitive to cold. On reportorial totality *Staphysagria* 200/one dose followed by *Phytum* 30/tds for 15 days was prescribed on first visit (15/5/2018). Gradually repetition and higher potency made the patient to improve markedly.

Table 19: Observations and prescriptions: Case report 10

Date	Changes in signs and symptom	Treatment
29/5/2018 to 13/8/2018	Dryness of skin- reduced. Itching and burning <by scratching reduced. Cracks b/l palm and sole reduced.	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds
14/8/2018	Dryness of skin reappeared Itching and burning<by scratching reappeared Cracks b/l palm and sole present	<i>Staphysagria</i> 200/ 1dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
28/8/2018 to 19/11/2018	Dryness of skin relieved. Itching and burning <by scratching reduced. Cracks b/l palm and sole reduced.	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds
20/11/2018	Dryness of skin again present Itching and burning <by scratching reappearing as previous. Cracks b/l palm and sole present.	<i>Staphysagria</i> 200/1dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
4/12/2018 to 11/2/2019	Dryness of skin relieved. Itching and burning <by scratching reduced. Cracks b/l palm and sole relieved.	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds
12/2/2019	Dryness of skin present. Itching and burning <by scratching same as before. Cracks b/l palm and sole reappeared.	<i>Staphysagria</i> 1M/1dose <i>Phytum</i> 30/tds/ 15 days
26/2/2019 upto 4/6/2019	Dryness of skin relieved Itching of skin- reduced Cracks b/l palm and sole relieved Patient’s symptoms was better	<i>Phytum</i> 30/tds

Table 20: Pre and Post VAS & DLQI scores of Case Report 10

Scale score	Before treatment	After treatment
VAS score (itching)	8	1
VAS score (distress)	6	3
DLQI score	9	4



Case 10 A: Before treatment (palm) ((15/5/2018)



Case 10 B: After treatment palm (4/6/2019)



Case 10 C: Before treatment (sole)

Case 10 D: After treatment (sole)

Fig 10: Photograph of patient before and after treatment**Discussion**

Homoeopathic materia medica and repertories offer numerous medicines for the common symptoms of Palmoplantar dermatitis. However the selection of similimum is governed by characteristic symptoms. In the aforementioned cases case analysis and evaluation was done by Kentian method to formulate the totality of symptoms. However retrospectively a symptom analysis of remedies was conducted using Kent's repertory for common symptoms of PPD. The patients were prescribed a single dose. In all cases the starting potency selected on basis of guidelines of Homoeopathic posology was 200th centesimal. The subsequent prescriptions were as per patient response. Although the treatment response and period varied from case to case, no patient reported with relapse or recurrence of the symptoms over 1 year of follow up. Analysis of cases showed that prolonged period of psychological stress might be cause of onset and progression condition of these cases. As hands and feet are under consistent stress during daily life of a person adequate advise for hygiene and regimen needs to be given to patients.

Conclusion: Palmoplantar dermatitis is a form of Dermatitis that presents many challenges as the patients ability to work is affected by both the cosmetic aspect and the resultant discomfort. In the case reports described above clinical improvement was sustained in Palmoplantar dermatitis following homeopathic treatment and significant positive result were observed on assessment by VAS (itching and distress) and DLQI scores. The patients were able to continue with their normal lifestyle. The above case reports clearly indicate a rationale for using individualised homoeopathic medicines in cases of Palmoplantar dermatitis.

Conflict of interest

None

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