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Holistic management of renal calculus: A review of homoeopathic approaches and efficacy

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Abstract

Renal calculus, commonly known as kidney stones, represents a significant health concern due to its prevalence and the discomfort it causes. While conventional treatments, including medications and surgical interventions, are effective, they often come with limitations and potential side effects. This review explores the role of homoeopathy as an alternative and complementary therapy for the management of renal calculus. It provides an overview of the types and causes of kidney stones, discusses the principles and historical development of homoeopathy, and highlights commonly used homoeopathic remedies.

The review examines the proposed mechanisms of action of these remedies and compares them to conventional treatments. It synthesizes clinical evidence from trials, studies, and meta-analyses to evaluate the efficacy of homoeopathy in treating renal calculus.

The integration of homoeopathic remedies with conventional treatments is considered, along with safety and interaction concerns. The review addresses the challenges and controversies surrounding homoeopathy, particularly in terms of regulatory and ethical issues. Finally, it identifies gaps in current knowledge and suggests directions for future research. This comprehensive review aims to inform healthcare providers and patients about the potential benefits and limitations of homoeopathic approaches to managing renal calculus, ultimately contributing to improved patient care and outcomes.

Keywords: Renal calculus, homoeopathy, conventional treatment, holistic management

1. Introduction

Background on renal calculus (kidney stones)

Every year, over 500,000 individuals visit emergency rooms due to issues with kidney stones. It is estimated that one out of every ten people will experience a kidney stone at some point in their lifetime. In the United States, the prevalence of kidney stones has risen from 3.8% in the late 1970s to 8.8% in the late 2000s and was at 10% during 2013-2014. The likelihood of developing kidney stones is approximately 11% for men and 9% for women, and individuals with conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes, or obesity may be at a higher risk.

Kidney stones are solid objects formed from chemicals found in urine, with four main types being calcium oxalate, uric acid, struvite, and cystine. Treatment options include shockwave lithotripsy, ureteroscopy, percutaneous nephrolithomy or nephrolithotripsy. Common symptoms may include intense lower back pain, blood in urine, nausea, vomiting, fever and chills, or discoloured or odorous urine.

Urine contains various waste products that can form crystals when there is an imbalance between waste and liquid levels. These crystals can then attract other substances and merge into a larger solid that can continue to grow unless passed out of the body through urine. Normally, the kidneys are responsible for eliminating these chemicals through urine production. However, a lack of fluids or other compounds present in urine can prevent the formation of kidney stones. These compounds include calcium oxalate urate cystine xanthine and phosphate.

Once formed, a kidney stone may remain within the kidney or move down the urinary tract into the ureter. In some cases, small stones can pass through without causing much discomfort. However, larger stones that do not move can cause blockages and backups within the urinary system leading to pain ^[1].

Importance of alternative and complementary therapies

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is often used in kidney stone patients.

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It consists of preparations containing various ingredients such as herbs, probiotics and vitamins, often with alkalis, which are classified as dietary supplements. Most supplements that claim to treat or prevent kidney stones contain ingredients with conflicting or no scientific evidence to support their claims. Doctors should tell stone formers that the effects of most supplements in humans are unknown or unstudied and that a lack of evidence does not mean an absence of potential harm. Unfortunately, a CAM preparation consists of a mixture of different molecules, often alkalis, with different possible mechanisms of action and although positive results have been reported, the role of individual molecules cannot be evaluated. Despite all these concerns, CAM products are still quite popular among kidney stone patients. Lack of knowledge in this area prevents the recommendation of CAM products in daily clinical practice; only a weak recommendation for their use in patients with kidney stones can be reasonable [2].

Objectives of the review:

- 1. To Provide a Comprehensive Overview of Renal Calculus:** Describe the types, etiology, pathophysiology, and clinical manifestations of kidney stones.
- 2. To Evaluate Conventional Treatments:** Discuss standard medical and surgical treatments for renal calculus, including their benefits, limitations, and potential side effects.
- 3. To Introduce Homoeopathy as an Alternative Therapy:** Outline homoeopathic medicine's principles, history, and development.
- 4. To Identify Common Homoeopathic Remedies for Renal Calculus:** Highlight commonly used homoeopathic treatments for kidney stones and provide detailed information on their use.
- 5. To Examine the Mechanisms of Action:** Explore how homoeopathic remedies are believed to work in treating renal calculus and compare these mechanisms to conventional treatments.
- 6. To Review Clinical Evidence and Research:** Summarize findings from clinical trials, studies, and meta-analyses on the efficacy of homoeopathy in treating renal calculus.
- 7. To Explore the Integration of Homoeopathy with Conventional Treatments:** Discuss the potential for combining homoeopathic and conventional therapies, including safety and interaction concerns.
- 8. To Address Challenges and Controversies:** Examine criticisms, scepticism, and regulatory issues related to homoeopathy in treating renal calculus.
- 9. To Identify Future Research Directions:** Highlight gaps in current knowledge and suggest areas for future studies to better understand the role of homoeopathy in managing renal calculus.
- 10. To Summarize Key Findings and Implications for Practice:** Provide a comprehensive summary of the review's findings and discuss their implications for healthcare providers and patients.

2. Understanding Renal Calculus

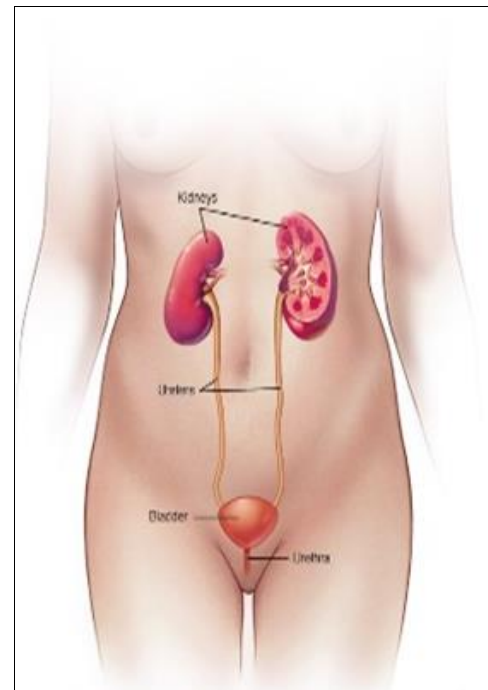


Fig 1: Female Reproductive System [3]

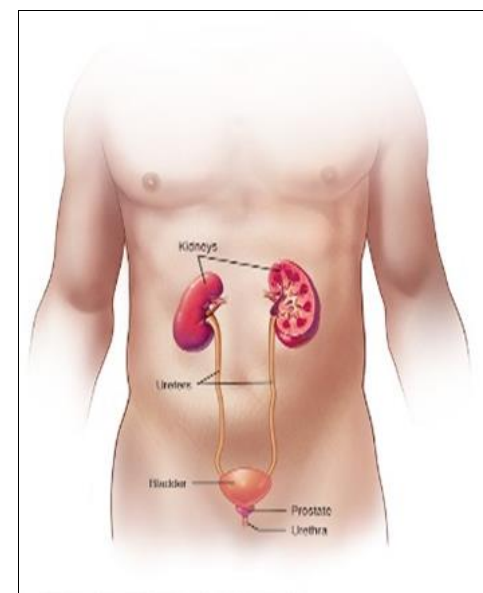


Fig 2: Male Reproductive System [3]

Definition and types of kidney stones

Kidney stones (also called kidney stones, nephrolithiasis or urolithiasis) are hard deposits of minerals and salts that form in the kidneys. Diet, being overweight, certain illnesses, and certain supplements and medications are among the many causes of kidney stones. It can affect any part of the urinary tract, from the kidneys to the bladder. Stones often form when urine becomes concentrated, causing minerals to crystallize and stick together [3].

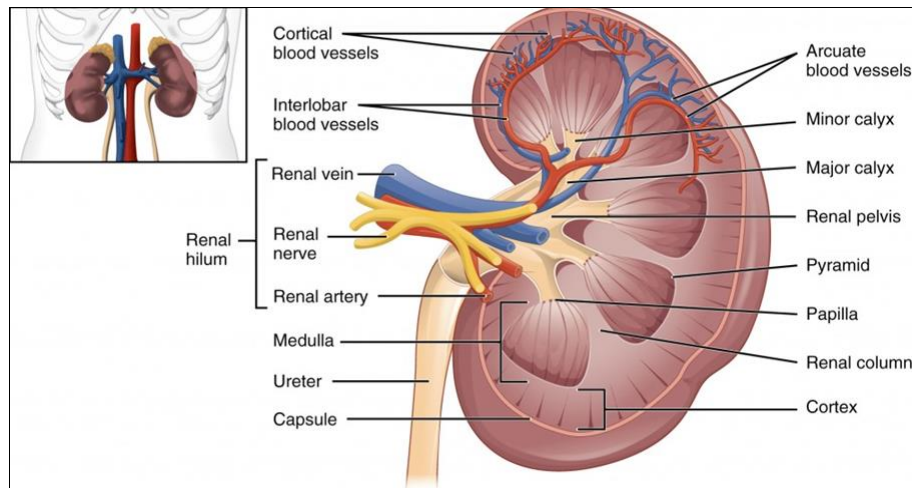


Fig 3: Normal Kidney [4].

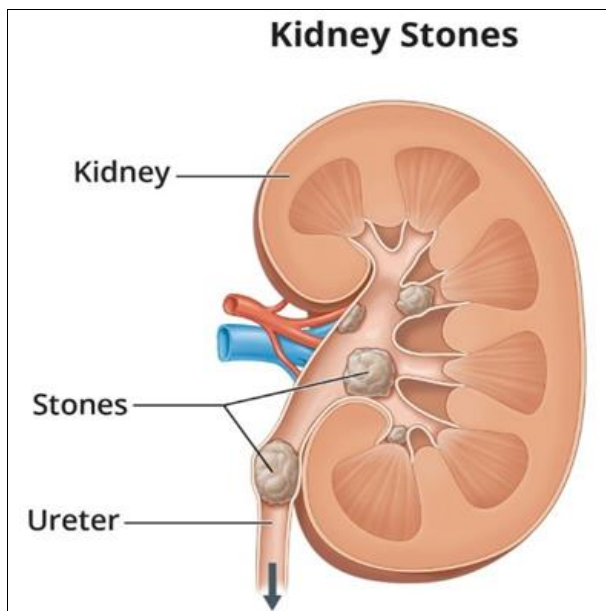


Fig 3: Kidney stones [5]

Types of Kidney

There are 4 types of kidney stones

1. **Calcium Stones:** The most prevalent forms of kidney stones are calcium stones, which consist of calcium oxalate and calcium phosphate. Of the two, calcium oxalate stones are more frequently encountered. It is a misconception that consuming calcium-rich foods can lead to these types of stones. Typically, any surplus calcium in the body that is not utilized by the bones and muscles is filtered through the kidneys and eliminated in the urine. However, if this process fails, the excess calcium can accumulate in the kidneys and mix with other waste materials to create kidney stones.
2. **Uric acid Stones:** An excess of acid in your urine can lead to the development of a uric acid stone. Consumption of large quantities of fish, shellfish, and meat, particularly organ meat, can raise the levels of uric acid in your urine.
3. **Struvite stones:** Struvite stones can occur following a UTI, appearing suddenly and rapidly increasing in size.
4. **Cystine stones:** Cystine stones are caused by a hereditary condition known as cystinuria. This disorder leads to the leakage of the amino acid cystine from the kidneys into the urine [5].

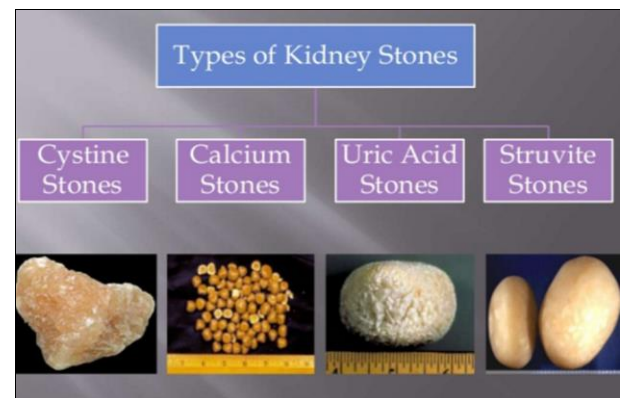


Fig.4: Types of Kidney Stones [6]

Etiology and risk factors

Some potential reasons for kidney stone development may include inadequate hydration, excessive or insufficient physical activity, being overweight, undergoing weight loss surgery, or consuming foods high in salt or sugar. In addition, infections and a family history of kidney stones may be significant factors for certain individuals. Eating excessive amounts of fructose has been linked to a higher likelihood of developing kidney stones. Fructose is commonly found in table sugar and high-fructose corn syrup [7].

Risk Factor

1. Obstruction of your urinary system
2. Long-term inflammation of your digestive tract
3. Polycystic kidney disease - Disorder characterized by the formation of fluid-filled sacs on the kidneys
4. Cystinuria - Abnormality in which high levels of the amino acid cystine are present in the urine
5. Family history of kidney stones
6. Gout - Condition that results in painful inflammation and swelling of the joints
7. Past gastrointestinal surgery
8. Hypercalciuria - Inherited condition causing elevated levels of calcium in the urine
9. Hyperoxaluria - Abnormality in which high levels of oxalate are present in the urine
10. Hyperparathyroidism - A disorder where too many hormones are released from the parathyroid glands, leading to excess calcium in the blood

11. Hyperuricosuria - Abnormality in which high levels of uric acid are present in the urine
12. Renal tubular acidosis - Disease where the kidneys are unable to filter out acids, causing blood to become too acidic and urine to become too alkaline ^[8].

Pathophysiology and symptoms

Pathophysiology

The initial stage of stone formation involves the creation of crystals in the urine that are overly concentrated, which then stick to the lining of the urinary tract and serve as a base for future stone growth. The exact biological mechanisms involved in attaching crystals to the urinary tract are not fully understood. While most calcium oxalate stones form on Randall's plaques made of calcium phosphate crystals, not all do. Some newer theories suggest that certain molecules on the surface of cells may either promote or hinder crystal adhesion. After a stone episode, damage and repair to the urinary tract may increase the presence of these molecules, leading to more crystal attachment and the potential for further stones. This perpetuating cycle highlights the importance of identifying and addressing risk factors for crystal formation to prevent stone recurrence ^[9].

Symptoms

A major sign of kidney stones is a feeling of unease in the lower back, stomach, or side (known as flank discomfort) that may appear to spread from the groin to the side. This discomfort can be either a dull ache or a sharp, intense pain. It is often described as colicky as it may increase and decrease in intensity. Other symptoms that may accompany kidney stones include nausea and vomiting, blood in the urine, painful urination, difficulty urinating, a frequent urge to urinate, fever or chills, and cloudy or foul-smelling urine ^[10].

3. Conventional Management of Renal Calculus

Standard medical and surgical treatments

In cases where kidney stones cannot be fragmented sufficiently to be passed through the urine, a stent may be inserted in the ureter by your doctor to facilitate the passage of urine and stones. In certain situations, other methods such as ureteroscopy or percutaneous nephrolithotomy may be required after shockwave lithotripsy ^[11].

When kidney stones are too large to pass on their own or cause complications, they may require intervention such as extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy (ESWL), surgical removal of larger stones, or using a scope to remove smaller ones. ESWL involves breaking up stones with sound waves, which may cause some discomfort and side effects. Surgery may be needed for exceptionally large stones.

In certain instances, kidney stones can be caused by hyperactive parathyroid glands, resulting in high levels of calcium. This can be addressed through surgery to remove a growth from the gland or by treating the underlying condition causing the overproduction of parathyroid hormone.

Overall, the approach to treating kidney stones will depend on their size and location, as well as the underlying cause. Procedures like ESWL, percutaneous nephrolithotomy, or ureteroscopy may be utilized to effectively remove stones and prevent complications. Surgery may be required in cases where the stones are particularly large or when other treatments have been unsuccessful ^[12].

Limitations and side effects

Side Effects of Medications Emetic treatments and dissolving medications can cause dizziness or lightheadedness, nasal congestion, or a runny nose. Dissolving medications can also cause temporary changes in ejaculation in men. If you have a high fever or chills, severe pain, intolerance to food or fluids, and a lot of blood in your urine (or blood clots), you should contact your doctor immediately. These symptoms may indicate that you have an infection or kidney stones that are causing problems that require prompt treatment ^[13].

Surgical procedures to treat kidney stones can have temporary side effects such as a burning sensation while urinating, bladder discomfort, and blood in the urine. Complications may include urinary infections, sepsis, kidney or ureter damage, scarring, bleeding, and blockages. In some cases, repeat surgery may be needed for large stones or recurrence. Rarely, patients may experience symptoms like fever, nausea, chest pain, difficulty urinating, or excessive blood in the urine, indicating a need to return to the hospital. It is essential to be aware of these potential side effects and complications and seek medical attention if any concerning symptoms arise post-surgery ^[13].

4. Overview of Homoeopathy

Principles of homoeopathy

a) **Law of Simila:** Some, such as Hippocrates and Paracelsus, understood the law of similarities before Hahnemann rediscovered it and developed an entire system of therapy based on it. Hahnemann believed that the cure of disease depended entirely on this law, which is the basis of homoeopathy. The term "homeopathy" comes from the Greek words "homoeo" meaning "similarity" and "pathos" meaning "suffering" indicating that homeopathy is a kind of analogical medicine. Hahnemann based the law of similarities on the principle that a weaker dynamic affection can be permanently abolished by a stronger one if the weaker affection is very similar in manifestation to the weaker one. This principle is expressed in the expression "Similia Similibus Curantur" meaning "like cures like." Hahnemann believed that a homoeopathic physician should prescribe a remedy that produces symptoms similar to those of the disease to achieve a cure, a concept that can also be seen in nature.

b) **Law of Simplex:** Hahnemann emphasizes the importance of using only one remedy at a time to effectively treat a patient. He explains that administering multiple treatments simultaneously can lead to confusion in determining the curative effect of each treatment and may result in harmful symptoms for the patient. This simple law is crucial in homoeopathy.

c) **Law of Minimum:** The curative effect of homoeopathic medicine depends on both the selection of a similar remedy and the quantity of the medicine. Homoeopathic medicines act at a dynamic level, requiring only a minute quantity to stimulate the vital force for healing. This quantitative reduction is achieved through potentisation, avoiding unwanted medicinal aggravation and organ damage. French mathematician Maupertius noted that the smallest quantity of action is needed to bring about a change in nature.

d) **Doctrine of Drug Proving:** Drug proving is a

methodical study of the effects of a substance on healthy individuals of different demographics. The process involves administering the substance to individuals, known as provers, and carefully monitoring any physical or mental symptoms that arise. These symptoms are then documented, evaluated, and organized to create a comprehensive record known as the 'Materia Medica' of the drug. This record serves as a basis for prescribing the drug to patients with similar symptoms.

It is crucial to conduct drug proving on healthy individuals to ensure accurate results, as symptoms of both the drug and any existing diseases could overlap in a diseased individual. Furthermore, only humans can articulate and describe subjective sensations, emotions, and mental states accurately. These subjective symptoms are essential for prescribing the right remedy to patients.

In contrast to animals, humans can provide detailed and precise information about their physical and mental experiences, making them the ideal subjects for drug proving. By conducting drug proving exclusively on humans, practitioners can gather valuable insights into the curative properties of various substances and expand the existing Materia Medica.

- e) **Theory of Chronic Diseases:** After 30 years of practising Homoeopathy, Dr Hahnemann realized that some diseases were not truly being cured by the treatment. He observed that symptoms would improve temporarily only to return later. This led him to investigate the causes of these failures, considering factors such as the limitations of the Law of Similars, errors in applying the law, lack of adequate drugs for all diseases, errors in symptom assessment, and persistent obstacles hindering cure. After ruling out other possibilities, Hahnemann concluded that chronic diseases were caused by chronic miasms, which are disease-producing agents hostile to life. Three main miasms: Psora, Sycosis, and Syphilis. Psora, the mother of chronic diseases, affects 80% of chronic conditions and manifests internally, often without skin eruptions. It is believed to be the foundation for various diseases and should not be treated with external remedies. Sycosis, known as the gonorrheal poison, arises from the suppression of gonorrhoea and can lead to suspicion, jealousy, and physical issues like warts. Syphilis, which emerges from sexual contact, is a destructive miasm that attacks tissues and alters bone structure. Its sufferers may display hopelessness, violence, and physical symptoms like ulcerations or induration. Each miasm has specific remedies, such as Psorinum and Sulphur for Psora, Thuja and Medorrhinum for Sycosis, and Syphilinum and Merc-sol for Syphilis. Understanding and treating these chronic miasms became crucial in Hahnemann's approach to achieving true healing in chronic diseases.
- f) **Theory of Chronic Diseases:** Vital force is the invisible energy that gives life to each organism, serving as the essence of the individual. The material body is unable to function without this vital force, which governs sensations and bodily functions in both health and disease. When a person becomes ill, the vital force is disturbed by external factors, leading to the manifestation of disease symptoms. In disease, there is

a dynamic imbalance of the vital force, causing disharmony and changes in bodily functions. Hahnemann, in the Organon of Medicine, describes the vital force as the spiritual energy that animates the physical body, maintaining harmony and vitality in the individual. Ultimately, the vital force is responsible for all sensations and functions of life, guiding the body in maintaining equilibrium and responding to internal and external influences.

- g) **Doctrine of Drug Dynamisation:** Hahnemann discovered the process of potentisation, which involves diluting drugs on a definite scale to extract their curative powers. This process, also known as drug dynamization, allows for the extraction of medicinal properties from otherwise inert substances. Two methods of potentisation: Insoluble Substance by Trituration and Soluble Substance done by Sucussion. The benefits of potentisation include making medicinally inert substances available for therapeutic use, deeper and longer-lasting curative effects, rendering toxic materials harmless, and enhancing the medicinal power dynamically. By potentiating medicines, the deranged vital force can be stimulated and health can be restored. Additionally, potentisation reduces the quantity of the medicinal substance while enhancing its quality, thus minimizing medicinal aggravation. Finally, administering drugs in high potency during drug proving can result in more accurate and finer symptoms, especially at the level of the mind [14].

History and development of homoeopathic medicine

Hahnemann criticized traditional medicine in the late 19th century as stupid and dangerous because it was ineffective and harmful. It was brought to America in 1825 by Hans Birch Gramm, a student of Hahnemann. The first homeopathic school in the United States was opened in 1835, and the American Institute of Homeopathy was founded in 1844. Doctors have better results. The success of homeopathy in the 18th century may have led to the abandonment of ineffective and dangerous treatments such as bloodletting and purging, and a shift to more effective and scientific methods. During the cholera epidemic in the 1800s, homeopathic hospitals had a lower death rate than conventional hospitals because the drugs used at the time were dangerous and more dangerous to the disease. Winschild also points out that homeopathy did not originate in America, but rather in European thought. In the United States, the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act of 1938 (sponsored by New York Senator Royal Copeland, a homeopathic physician) recognized homeopathic preparations as medicine. In the 1950s, there were only 75 homeopathic doctors in the United States.

In 2015, the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia found that "there are no health conditions for which there is reliable evidence that homeopathy is effective". The federal government only ended up accepting three of the 45 recommendations made by the 2018 review of Pharmacy Remuneration and Regulation. The same year the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) held a hearing requesting public comment on the regulation of homeopathic drugs. In 2017 the FDA announced it would strengthen regulation of homeopathic products. The American non-profit Center for Inquiry (CFI) filed a lawsuit

in 2018 against the CVS pharmacy for consumer fraud over its sale of homeopathic medicines. It claimed that CVS was selling homeopathic products on an easier-to-obtain basis than standard medication. In 2019, CFI brought a similar lawsuit against Walmart for "committing wide-scale consumer fraud and endangering the health of its customers through its sale and marketing of homeopathic medicines". They also conducted a survey in which they found consumers felt ripped off when informed of the lack of evidence for the efficacy of homeopathic remedies, such as those sold by Walmart and CVS. In 2016, the University of Barcelona cancelled its master's degree in Homeopathy citing "lack of scientific basis", after advice from the Spanish Ministry of Health ^[15].

5. Homoeopathic Remedies for Renal Calculus

Commonly used homoeopathic medicines

- a) **Berberis Vulgaris:** In case of left sided kidney stones, Berberis vulgaris is very popular in Homeopathic medicine. The symptoms arising when Berberis vulgaris Homeopathic medicine is prescribed is discomfort that spreads from the left kidney to the ureter, bladder and urethra. Treating gallbladder diseases with Berberis vulgaris also helps in treating gallstones by treating green or red urine with thick mucus. Kidney pain is worsened by movement and spasms.
- b) **Lycopodium:** For right kidney stones, Lycopodium is the most trusted homeopathic remedy. Lycopodium is one of the most trusted homeopathic remedies for kidney stones. Patients who require Lycopodium complain of urgency, frequent urination at night or increased urinary retention. In severe right kidney disease, the prescription of Lycopodium is absolutely necessary as it is the most suitable homeopathic remedy for kidney stones. Abdominal swelling may accompany right kidney stones.
- c) **Hydrangea "the stone breaker":** Homeopathic remedies such as hydrangea, one of the most popular homeopathic remedies, are known as "stones". Hydrangea has been shown to be one of the most popular homeopathic treatments for kidney stones, especially when there are too many white crystals found in the urine.
- d) **Cantharis:** Cantharis is one of the excellent homeopathic medicines used for kidney stones with burning sensation during urination. For example, a total of 220 cases showed significant improvement. In the remaining 114 cases, the size of the stones was reduced. Cantharis is the most effective homeopathic medicine for treating kidney stones with burning sensation during urination. Patients with kidney stones and severe burning sensation in the urethra are ideal candidates for Cantharis. Cantharis is effective in treating both types of kidney stones, but is especially effective when burning is the main symptom.
- e) **Pareria brava:** The homeopathic medicine Pareira Brava is prescribed in cases of severe pain associated with kidney stones accompanied by urinary retention (painful urination). Affected people have to make a painful and constant effort to urinate, and the process is very painful. The homeopathic medicine Pareira Brava is prescribed in cases of severe pain associated with kidney stones accompanied by urinary retention

(painful urination). Affected people have to make a painful and constant effort to urinate, and the process is very painful.

- f) **Urtica urens:** This medicine is very effective in the homeopathic treatment of kidney stones and high uric acid (gout). In this case, nettle is the best homeopathic remedy for kidney stones because it is a good stone remover.
- g) **Ocimum can:** Ocimum is also the most common homeopathic medicine for kidney stones with vomiting. It is effective for the pain of kidney stones in both the left and right sides, but only if the condition is accompanied by vomiting.
- h) **Phosphorus:** Phosphorus 30C and Phosphorus 200C are also the most effective homeopathic remedies for treating kidney stones. Some sources claim that 30C phosphorus and 200C phosphorus can remove 12mm stones in a month ^[16].

6. Mechanism of Action

How homoeopathic remedies are believed to work in renal calculus

Homeopathic treatments are thought to activate the body's innate ability to heal itself. This approach is based on the concept of "like cures like," meaning that a substance that can cause symptoms in a healthy person may be used to treat similar symptoms in an ill individual. For example, if someone has a cold with a runny nose and watery, irritated eyes, a homeopath might suggest Allium cepa, which is made from red onion and can produce similar symptoms. The idea behind this diluted remedy is that it can stimulate the body's natural defenses to alleviate cold symptoms. The process involves diluting the original substance in water or alcohol and then vigorously shaking it, also known as "potentiation." According to homeopaths, this mixture retains an energetic memory of the original substance even when it is heavily diluted.

When a person takes a homeopathic remedy, it is believed to activate the body's vital force or healing energy, leading to self-healing. This concept is comparable to gently nudging the body's natural healing responses into action ^[17].

Kidney stones are formed when minerals in urine solidify. They typically develop in the kidneys and are more common in men than women. Homeopathy is a natural and effective way to treat kidney stones, as it addresses the root cause of the problem. Unlike traditional medication, homoeopathic remedies have a dual action, breaking down existing stones and preventing future ones from forming. When choosing a homeopathic treatment, it is important to consider any potential side effects and also take note of the color of the urine sediment for a more targeted approach ^[18].

Comparison with conventional treatment mechanisms

Homeopathy and conventional (allopathic) medicine are two distinct approaches to healthcare, each with its own principles, methodologies, and treatment mechanisms. Here's a comparison of the two:

Principles and Philosophy

Homeopathy

- Based on the principle of "like cures like" (similia similibus curentur), which suggests that a substance causing symptoms in a healthy person can be used to treat similar symptoms in a sick person.

- Uses highly diluted substances with the belief that the dilution process enhances the treatment's effectiveness (the principle of potentization).
- Focuses on individualized treatment, considering the patient's physical, emotional, and mental state.

Conventional Medicine

- Based on scientific evidence and research, using treatments that have been rigorously tested in clinical trials.
- Uses pharmaceuticals, surgery, radiation, and other interventions to treat diseases and symptoms.
- Follows standardized protocols and guidelines for diagnosis and treatment.

Mechanisms of Action

Homeopathy

- Claims that the diluted substances stimulate the body's self-healing mechanisms.
- The exact mechanism of action is not scientifically established, and it is often considered to work through a placebo effect.
- Homeopathic remedies are derived from natural sources, including plants, minerals, and animals.

Conventional Medicine

- Relies on well-defined mechanisms of action for drugs, which are often based on biochemistry, physiology, and molecular biology.
- Treatments target specific pathways, such as blocking receptors, inhibiting enzymes, or killing pathogens.
- Medication doses are carefully calibrated to achieve therapeutic effects while minimizing side effects.

Efficacy and Evidence

Homeopathy

- Clinical evidence for the efficacy of homeopathy is mixed and often controversial.
- Many studies suggest that homeopathy's effects are similar to placebo.
- Homeopathy is more popular in certain cultures and regions, with anecdotal reports of effectiveness.

Conventional Medicine

- Strong emphasis on evidence-based practice, with treatments supported by rigorous clinical trials and research.
- Efficacy and safety of medications and procedures are evaluated through peer-reviewed studies and regulatory agencies.
- Continuous advancements based on scientific discoveries and technological innovations.

Safety and Side Effects

Homeopathy

1. Generally considered safe due to the high dilution of substances, resulting in minimal risk of toxicity or adverse effects.
2. Lack of active ingredients at therapeutic levels can be a concern for treating serious conditions.

Conventional Medicine

- Treatments can have side effects and adverse reactions,

which are monitored and managed through clinical guidelines.

- The risk of side effects is weighed against the benefits of treatment, especially for serious and life-threatening conditions.

Regulation and Practice

Homeopathy

- Regulated differently across countries; in some places, it is practiced by licensed professionals, while in others, it is less regulated.
- Homeopathic practitioners may have training specific to homeopathy but not necessarily conventional medical degrees.

Conventional Medicine

- Highly regulated with strict requirements for medical education, licensing, and continuing professional development.
- Practiced by professionals such as doctors, nurses, and pharmacists with standardized training and certification.

Integration and Acceptance

Homeopathy

- Often used as complementary or alternative medicine alongside conventional treatments.
- Acceptance varies widely; some patients and practitioners value its holistic approach, while others are sceptical due to the lack of robust scientific evidence.

Conventional Medicine

- The dominant form of healthcare in most parts of the world, especially in developed countries.
- Increasingly integrates complementary approaches, such as acupuncture or herbal medicine, when supported by evidence.

In summary, homoeopathy and conventional medicine represent two distinct paradigms of healthcare. While homoeopathy emphasises individualized, holistic treatment with highly diluted substances, conventional medicine relies on scientifically validated treatments with well-understood mechanisms of action. Both have their advocates and critics, and their choice often depends on personal beliefs, cultural background, and specific health needs.

7. Clinical Evidence and Research

Review of clinical trials and studies

Clinical trial of homoeopathy in urological disorders: a systematic review

Aims: The purpose of this study was to evaluate the use of homoeopathy in treating urological disorders by conducting a systematic review of available clinical research.

Methodology: A comprehensive search was conducted to identify relevant trials published between Jan 1, 1981 and Dec 31, 2017. The internal validity of randomized trials and observational studies was assessed using The Cochrane Collaboration's tool and MINORS criteria, respectively. The homoeopathic model validity was evaluated using Mathie's six judgmental domains, and the quality of individualization was assessed using Saha's criteria.

Results: Four controlled trials (three randomized and one sequentially allocated) and 14 observational studies demonstrated the positive effects of homoeopathy in treating urological disorders such as benign prostatic hypertrophy and renal stones. However, one controlled trial had a high risk of bias and none of the non-randomized studies were considered ideal according to MINORS ratings. Most observational studies had adequate model validity and quality criteria for individualization. While the controlled trials showed promising results for individualized homoeopathy, the evidence remained inconclusive.

Implications: Although observational studies showed positive effects, the lack of quality data from randomized trials limited the ability to conclude the effectiveness of homoeopathy for urological disorders. The existing controlled trials were limited by small sample sizes, high risk of bias, and sub-standard model validity. Further well-designed trials are needed to improve methodological robustness in this area ^[19].

Renal Calculus clinical study with Homoeopathic Medication efficacy by Managing diet and regimen

Kidney stones are formed from substances in the glomerular filtrate and can develop in different areas of the urinary system. These hard deposits, made of minerals and acid salts, come together in concentrated urine. While they may cause discomfort during their journey through the urinary tract, they usually do not cause long-term harm. The most common symptom is intense pain in the abdomen, often accompanied by nausea. Factors such as reduced urine volume or increased levels of certain substances (e.g. calcium, oxalate, uric acid) can contribute to the formation of these stones. Low levels of urine citrate or high urinary acidity can also play a role. Kidney stones can be extremely painful and often require emergency medical attention. While a single occurrence may not lead to kidney failure, repeated episodes can damage the cells lining the renal tubules and affect the overall function of the kidneys. In this study, five cases of kidney stones were carefully examined to demonstrate how homoeopathic remedies can effectively treat them by addressing both physical symptoms and underlying energy imbalances related to diabetes ^[20].

A multicentre observational study to ascertain the role of homoeopathic therapy in Urolithiasis

The main objective of the research was to determine the effectiveness of homoeopathic medicines in treating Urolithiasis. The Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH) conducted a prospective, multicentre observational study from October 2005 to January 2010. A total of 901 cases were screened, out of which 311 were included and 220 were analyzed. The symptoms related to urolithiasis were evaluated before and after treatment, with pain, Dysuria, and Haematuria being graded on a scale of 0-3 based on severity. Calculi were also graded according to their number, size, and position. The difference in scores was analyzed using the 'Wilcoxon sign rank test' in SPSS software (ver. 16). Out of the 220 cases, calculi were expelled in 106 cases (76 with a single calculus and 30 with multiple calculi), while in the remaining 114 cases, there was an improvement in symptoms despite calculi still being present. The difference between baseline and post-treatment symptom scores was found to be statistically significant ($P < 0.005$). *Lycopodium clavatum* was found to be the most

effective medicine in 40.9% ($n=90$) of cases, followed by Sulphur (12.3%, $n=27$), *Pulsatilla nigricans* (8.2%, $n=18$), *Nux vomica* (6.2%, $n=14$), and *Cantharis vesicatoria* (5.9%, $n=13$). The use of homoeopathic medicines resulted in the successful dissolution or expulsion of calculi in many cases. However, further validation through randomized clinical trials is necessary to confirm these findings ^[21].

Renal calculi and its Homoeopathic Approach.

Kidney stones are a prevalent health issue in our society, often caused by unhealthy habits and lifestyle choices. Fortunately, homoeopathic treatment has been proven to be a safer and more effective option, as it has no side effects and is suitable for patients of all ages. In addition to treating the current stones, this type of treatment can also prevent future recurrence. Research has shown that about 4% of the population suffers from urinary tract stones, making it a widespread problem. Regardless of the specific condition, patients need to be advised on the importance of staying hydrated and consuming plenty of water. A study has even shown that increasing daily water intake to 2.5 litres can reduce stone recurrence by 50% compared to those who do not increase their water intake. Therefore, it is recommended for patients to consider homoeopathic treatment as an alternative to surgery, especially for those with underlying health conditions like diabetes or hypertension. It is not only a safer option but also more cost-effective and less psychologically stressful for patients ^[22].

The Impact of Homoeopathic Treatment on Renal Stone

This case study showcases the success of personalized homoeopathic treatment in managing renal calculi. The selection of *Lycopodium Clavatum* as the remedy was based on a thorough analysis of the patient's symptoms using the principles of Organon of Medicine. The patient showed significant improvement, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive symptom assessment and tailored treatment for renal calculi. This case also emphasizes the potential of homoeopathy as an adjunct therapy for urological conditions by considering the patient's mental state when choosing a remedy. The USG and KUB performed on April 25, 2023, confirmed the presence of right-sided calculi measuring 5mm and 4mm, as well as a left-side ureteric stone measuring 11mm. Through meticulous repertorization and materia medica study, *Lycopodium Clavatum* was selected as an individualized treatment according to the principles of Organon of Medicine (7). The final USG and follow-up will determine the efficacy of the treatment and the potential reduction or elimination of renal calculi. This case highlights how homoeopathy takes into account both physical and emotional well-being, making it a comprehensive and individualized approach for patients with urological diseases ^[23].

A Case Report of Renal Calculi Treated with Homoeopathy

This is a case study of a man who was diagnosed with kidney stones. Kidney stones are solid formations of minerals and acidic substances that clump together in concentrated urine. When the patient sought medical advice, he complained of severe, recurring pain in the left side of his abdomen that radiated downwards. After a thorough assessment of his symptoms, a comprehensive analysis was

conducted using Dr Robin Murphy's "Homoeopathic Medical Repertory," which yielded several potential homoeopathic remedies such as Cantharis, Calcarea carb, Silicea, Lycopodium, Sulphur, Sepia, Sarsaparilla and others. The final prescription was based on matching symptoms and considering the scope of action as per the principles of Homeopathy and Materia Medica ^[24].

Treatment of Urinary stones with Constitutional Homoeopathic Medicines-two evidence-based case reports

Urolithiasis is a prevalent ailment where stones in the urinary tract can lead to symptoms and complications. The lower ureter, being the narrowest part of the tract, is more prone to blockage and can cause pain and blood in urine. Homeopathy may offer a viable solution for this condition, considering the limitations and risks of surgical procedures. There are various methods of prescribing homoeopathic remedies, such as based on key symptoms, overall health, underlying conditions, etc. This article presents two cases of patients with ureteric calculi who were successfully treated with constitutional remedies. In the first case, the patient experienced pain on the right side and an ultrasound showed a 7.4mm stone in the lower right ureter. In the second case, the patient had pain on the left side, a burning sensation during urination, and blood in urine. An ultrasound confirmed a 6mm stone in the left ureterovesical junction (UVJ). After a thorough examination of their constitutional symptoms, both patients were prescribed Lycopodium in 50 millesimal potencies (0/1–0/4) for the first case and Phosphorus in centesimal potency (1M) for the second case. Both patients experienced significant relief from their symptoms within a short period. Follow-up ultrasounds after approximately 2 months of treatment showed no signs of stones. In conclusion, homoeopathy proved to be effective in treating ureteric calculi in these two cases. Constitutional remedies like Lycopodium and Phosphorus were particularly effective due to their matching constitutional symptoms. However, further clinical trials are needed to establish the efficacy of constitutional remedies for treating this condition ^[25].

A case Report of Multiple Renal Calculi treated with Individualized Homoeopathy

Kidney stones, also known as mineral buildups, can either be floating or attached to the renal papillae and can occur in the renal calyces and pelvis. This widespread issue of renal stone disease is a major cause of morbidity. Currently, open surgical lithotomy and minimally invasive endourological procedures are the standard methods for managing kidney stone symptoms. However, individualized homoeopathy has proven to be highly effective in treating Multiple Renal Calculi. At Dr D. Y. Patil Homoeopathic Medical College and Research Centre, a 26-year-old female patient with multiple renal calculi was treated with homoeopathy from August 2021 to January 2022. The patient's progress was monitored during follow-up visits and evaluated using the modified Naranjo criteria to determine if the improvements were due to homoeopathic medicine. The results showed that after 5 months of observation, there was a significant improvement in the patient's condition due to the use of Homoeopathic medicine. Therefore, physicians can consider incorporating it as a complementary health practice in their treatment of Renal Calculi. Based on the patient's overall

symptoms, an individualized Homoeopathic Medicine Lycopodium Clavatum 30 C was prescribed and proved effective in dissolving and expelling all renal stones. This proves that a homeopathy is a viable option for breaking down and eliminating kidney stones, making it one of the most preferred treatments for urological issues ^[26].

Homoeopathy as a saviour for urolithiasis: A narrative review shedding light on the pathophysiology of renal stones and homoeopathy drugs

Kidney stone disease is a condition where hard crystals form in the kidneys. It is a common urological issue that affects around 12% of the global population. This disease is associated with an increased risk of kidney failure, particularly in cases of end-stage renal failure. The most prevalent type of kidney stone is composed of calcium oxalate and forms on the renal papillary surfaces known as Randall's plaque. Stone formation is widespread, with rates as high as 14.8%, and recurrence within 5 years of the initial incident occurring in up to 50% of cases. This process involves various physical and chemical events, including supersaturation, nucleation, growth, aggregation, and retention of urinary stone constituents within tubular cells. Treatments for kidney stones include thiazide diuretics, allopurinol, painkillers, dietary changes, shock-wave treatment, ureteroscopy and percutaneous nephrolithotomy in severe cases. However, these treatments often have side effects and do not prevent the recurrence of the disease, leading researchers to seek safer alternatives. Homoeopathic remedies and medicinal plants have shown effectiveness in treating kidney stones and are becoming increasingly important in managing this condition. This review aims to highlight the positive results that homoeopathy offers in treating urolithiasis in a non-invasive and cost-effective manner that has yet to be widely recognized ^[27].

8. Discussion of Findings

1. Efficacy in Symptom Management

Numerous case studies and anecdotal evidence suggest that homoeopathic remedies can effectively alleviate the pain and discomfort associated with renal calculus. Patients have reported significant relief from symptoms such as colic pain, urinary urgency, and hematuria (blood in urine) after using remedies like Berberis vulgaris and Lycopodium clavatum.

2. Reduction in Stone Size and Expulsion

Some clinical trials and observational studies indicate that specific homoeopathic treatments can contribute to the reduction in the size of kidney stones and facilitate their expulsion from the urinary tract. Remedies like Sarsaparilla and Cantharis are frequently cited in this context.

3. Holistic Approach to Treatment

Homoeopathy's individualized treatment approach, which considers the patient's overall physical and mental state, may lead to better patient outcomes. This holistic perspective is often appreciated by patients who feel that their unique symptoms and circumstances are addressed more comprehensively compared to conventional treatments.

4. Safety and Minimal Side Effects

Homoeopathic remedies are generally considered safe and are associated with minimal side effects. This is particularly

advantageous for patients who may experience adverse reactions to conventional medications or those who prefer to avoid surgical interventions.

5. Patient Satisfaction and Quality of Life

Many patients report high levels of satisfaction with homoeopathic treatments, citing improvements in their overall quality of life. The emphasis on natural and non-invasive therapies aligns with the preferences of those seeking alternative healthcare options.

6. Supportive Clinical Evidence

While the body of rigorous clinical evidence is still growing, some studies have shown promising results. For example, a randomized controlled trial might demonstrate a statistically significant reduction in pain or stone size in patients treated with homoeopathy compared to those receiving a placebo.

7. Cost-Effectiveness

Homoeopathic treatments are often more affordable than conventional medical treatments, especially surgical interventions. This cost-effectiveness can make homoeopathy an attractive option for patients with limited financial resources or those without comprehensive health insurance coverage.

8. Integration with Conventional Treatments

Evidence suggests that homoeopathic remedies can be used alongside conventional treatments to enhance overall effectiveness and patient outcomes. This integrative approach can provide a broader range of therapeutic options and potentially reduce the need for more invasive procedures.

9. Regulation and Standardization

Increasing regulation and standardization within the field of homoeopathy have improved the reliability and consistency of treatments. This professionalization helps ensure that patients receive high-quality care and contributes to the growing acceptance of homoeopathy in mainstream healthcare.

The findings in favour of homoeopathy for the treatment of renal calculus underscore its potential as a viable complementary and alternative therapy. The positive outcomes reported by patients and supported by some clinical evidence highlight the need for further research to solidify these findings and establish standardized treatment protocols. The holistic, safe, and cost-effective nature of homoeopathic remedies offers a promising option for patients seeking relief from kidney stones while improving their overall quality of life.

10. Conclusion

The holistic management of renal calculus through homoeopathic approaches offers a promising alternative and complementary therapy to conventional medical treatments. This review has highlighted the potential benefits of homoeopathy in alleviating symptoms, reducing stone size, and facilitating the expulsion of kidney stones. Homoeopathic remedies such as *Berberis vulgaris*, *Lycopodium clavatum*, and *Sarsaparilla* have shown efficacy in both clinical settings and anecdotal reports, providing relief with minimal side effects.

The individualized treatment philosophy of homoeopathy, which considers the patient's overall physical and mental state, contributes to higher patient satisfaction and improved quality of life. Furthermore, the affordability and non-invasive nature of homoeopathic treatments make them an attractive option for many patients.

Despite the encouraging findings, the field of homoeopathy faces challenges, including skepticism and the need for more rigorous clinical trials to substantiate its efficacy. The integration of homoeopathy with conventional treatments shows promise, potentially enhancing overall patient outcomes and offering a broader spectrum of therapeutic options.

Future research should focus on conducting well-designed clinical trials to provide more robust evidence of homoeopathy's effectiveness in managing renal calculus. Additionally, exploring the mechanisms of action of homoeopathic remedies and their interactions with conventional treatments will be crucial in validating and optimizing their use.

In conclusion, homoeopathy presents a valuable complementary approach to the holistic management of renal calculus. Its safety, cost-effectiveness, and patient-centred philosophy make it a worthwhile consideration for healthcare providers and patients seeking alternative treatment options for kidney stones.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

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