International Journal of Homoeopathic Sciences

**E-ISSN:** 2616-4493
**P-ISSN:** 2616-4485
www.homoeopathicjournal.com
IJHS 2025; 9(2): 615-617
Received: 24-03-2025
Accepted: 27-04-2025

**Dr. Virendra Singh Umath**
PG Scholar, Department of Practice of Medicine, R.K.D.F. Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital, Research Centre Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

**Dr. Shashindra Kumar Sharma**
Professor and H.O.D, Department of Practice of Medicine, R.K.D.F. Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital, Research Centre Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

**Corresponding Author:**
**Dr. Virendra Singh Umath**
PG Scholar, Department of Practice of Medicine, R.K.D.F. Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital, Research Centre Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India

# Understanding external applications in homoepathy: A review

**Virendra Singh Umath and Shashindra Kumar Sharma**

**DOI:** https://www.doi.org/10.33545/26164485.2025.v9.i2.J.1557

**Abstract**
External application in homeopathy refers to the use of medicinal substances applied directly to the skin or mucous membranes for therapeutic purposes. While homeopathy primarily advocates internal administration of medicines based on the principle of "like cures like," the concept of external application holds significance, particularly in acute, local, or superficial conditions. This review explores the concept and use of external applications in homeopathy. It highlights how these applications can support healing when used appropriately in clinical practice.

**Keywords:** Homeopathy, external application, topical remedies, therapeutic

## Introduction
Homeopathy is a holistic system of medicine based on the principle of “similia similibus curentur” let like be cured by like. While the internal administration of potentized remedies forms the cornerstone of homeopathic treatment, the use of external applications has also been recognized since the inception of the system. Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of homeopathy, discussed the therapeutic potential of topical applications in the Organon of Medicine, particularly in aphorisms 284 to 291 of the 6th edition, where he emphasized their role in the management of local affections and injuries [1].

External applications refer to the local use of homeopathic substances in the form of ointments, liniments, compresses, or lotions applied directly to the skin or mucous membranes. These are particularly useful in acute, localized, or superficial conditions, including wounds, ulcers, burns, sprains, and skin eruptions [2]. Commonly used external remedies include Calendula officinalis for cuts and wounds, Arnica Montana for trauma and bruising, Hypericum perforatum for nerve injuries, and Ruta graveolens for ligament and tendon injuries [3, 4].

Though classical homeopathy warns against mere local palliation without addressing the constitutional cause, it acknowledges that external applications can be used complementarily, provided they do not suppress the disease process or disturb the vital force [1]. Modern homeopathic practitioners increasingly recognize the value of such applications, especially in integrative care settings, where relief of symptoms and promotion of local healing are essential.

This review aims to critically explore the historical perspective, theoretical foundations, indications, preparation forms, therapeutic scope by drawing insights from the work of esteemed Homoeopathic pioneers like Dr. William Boericke, and clinical relevance of external applications in homeopathic practice, in light of classical principles and contemporary usage.

## Historical background and theoretical basis of external applications in homeopathy
The use of external applications in homeopathy dates back to the early teachings of Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, who recognized their therapeutic value alongside internal treatment. In the 6th edition of the Organon of Medicine, Hahnemann discusses the external use of homeopathic medicines, emphasizing their role in acute local affections, injuries, and inflammations where internal remedies alone may be insufficient [1,5]. He cautioned that external applications should be used judiciously to avoid suppression of symptoms or disturbance of the vital force [1,6].

Historically, homeopathic practitioners have utilized topical preparations such as ointments,

poultices, and compresses to facilitate localized healing. These external treatments were particularly common in managing trauma, burns, ulcers, and musculoskeletal complaints, complementing systemic therapy [7]. The principle behind their use aligns with homeopathy's holistic approach, wherein external applications act as supportive measures to enhance the body's natural healing process without overriding the fundamental law of similars [8].

The theoretical basis for external application also involves the concept of "vital force," which governs the body's self-regulation and health. Hahnemann stated that while the vital force primarily responds to internal remedies, external applications may assist in removing local obstructions or accelerating tissue repair when applied correctly [5, 9]. The preparation and potency of topical homeopathic medicines must be carefully chosen to respect this delicate balance and avoid harmful interference with systemic treatment.

In recent decades, renewed interest in external applications has emerged as homeopathy integrates with complementary and alternative medicine practices. This has expanded the scope of topical remedies, with modern formulations tailored for enhanced penetration and patient comfort [10]. Nevertheless, adherence to classical homeopathic principles remains essential to ensure these applications support rather than suppress the healing process.

**Types of external applications in homeopathy**

External applications in homeopathy are available in various forms, each suited for specific clinical indications. The main types include ointments, liniments, poultices, compresses, and baths [11].

**Ointments and creams**

These are semi-solid preparations used for skin conditions such as eczema, burns, ulcers, and wounds. Remedies like Calendula and Arnica are commonly prepared as ointments for their healing properties [12].

**Liniments and oils**

Liquid preparations used for musculoskeletal complaints such as sprains, strains, and arthritis. Ruta graveolens and Arnica liniments are frequently applied for pain relief and reduction of inflammation [13].

**Poultices and compresses**

Soft moist masses applied over affected areas to reduce swelling and promote healing. Poultices often contain potentized herbs combined with other substances for acute injuries [14].

**Baths and sponging**

Used for conditions involving large surface areas or systemic fever management, where homeopathic remedies are added to water for external application [15].

The selection of preparation depends on the nature and location of the complaint, patient comfort, and the remedy used. The potency for external use is generally lower (e.g., mother tinctures to 6C), considering the limited systemic absorption [16].

**Commonly used external remedies and their applications**

Several homeopathic remedies are particularly suited for external application due to their known local effects:

***Arnica montana***

Widely used for trauma, bruises, sprains, and muscle soreness. Externally applied arnica ointment accelerates resolution of hematomas and reduces pain [17].

***Calendula officinalis***

Applied in wound healing, burns, and skin ulcers, it promotes tissue regeneration and prevents infection [18].

***Hypericum perforatum***

Used for nerve injuries and painful wounds, often in tincture or ointment form [19].

***Ruta graveolens***

Applied topically for tendonitis, ligament injuries, and sprains to reduce inflammation and promote healing [20].

**List of uncommon remedies [19]**

- ***Alstonia scholaris*:** Locally, for ulcers and rheumatic pains.
- ***Argemone mexicana*:** Fresh juice is applied to ulcers and warts.
- ***Balsamum peruvianum*:** Locally as a stimulant to raw surfaces in indolent ulcers, scabies, cracked nipples, rhagades, itch. Promotes granulation, removes fetor.
- ***Carboneum sulphuratum*:** Locally in facial neuralgia and sciatica.
- ***Ceanothus*:** Locally as hair tonic.
- ***Chloralum hydratum*:** Locally, in offensive foot-sweat, bathe with one percent solution.
- ***Cinnamon*:** Oil of cinnamon in aqueous solution, best local disinfectant. 3-4 drops in two quarts of water as a douche, wherever a germicide and disinfectant is needed.
- ***Cistus canadensis*:** Locally as a wash to arrest fetid discharges.
- ***Cochlearia armoracia*:** Used as a gargle in scorbutic gums and sore throat. Locally to cure dandruff.
- ***Eupatorium aromaticum*:** Tincture, locally, in sore mouth and sore nipples.
- ***Methylium salicylicum*:** An artificial gaultheria oil for rheumatism, especially when the salicylates cannot be used. Pruritus and epididymitis, locally.
- ***Geranium maculatum*:** Locally, in ulcers, it will destroy the pyogenic membrane.
- ***Helianthus*:** Externally, as vulnerary like arnica and calendula.
- ***Ichthyolum*:** Externally, it is used as an ointment, with lanoline 20-50 percent, for chronic eczema and psoriasis, also acne rosacea and gouty joints.
- ***Magnesia sulphurica*:** Locally 1:4 in water in septic conditions, erysipelas, orchitis, boils.
- ***Mentha piperita*:** Tincture locally, in pruritus vaginae.
- ***Mentholum*:** Externally for itching, use 1 percent solution or ointment.
- ***Momordica balsamina*:** Used externally as a liniment and poultice for burns, chapped hands.
- ***Rhus glabra*:** Used locally to soften spongy gums, aphthae and pharyngitis.
- ***Rumex acetosa*:** Used locally for epithelioma of face.
- ***Sabina*:** Locally for warts, use tincture.
- ***Sempervivum tectorum*:** Tincture locally for bites of insects, stings of bees, and poisoned wounds, warts.

- ***Sulphurous acid*:** As a spray in tonsillitis.
- ***Ustilago maydis*:** Psoriasis (internally and externally).

The choice of remedy depends on the clinical presentation, and topical use should complement constitutional treatment rather than replace it [1].

**Advantages and limitations of external applications**

**Advantages**

- Provide localized and direct therapeutic effect.
- Minimal systemic side effects.
- Useful in acute injuries and superficial conditions.
- Can offer symptomatic relief quickly.
- Enhance patient compliance in certain cases [21].

**Limitations**

- Risk of symptom suppression if misused.
- Limited efficacy in deep or systemic diseases.
- Potential for skin irritation or allergic reactions.
- May delay constitutional treatment if over-relied upon [22].

Careful patient evaluation and adherence to homeopathic principles are necessary to avoid these pitfalls.

**Contemporary relevance and clinical integration**

In modern homeopathic practice, external applications have regained interest, especially in integrative medicine frameworks. They offer adjunctive care for pain management, wound healing, and skin disorders, aligning well with holistic patient-centered approaches [23]. Research and clinical observations support their safe and effective use when appropriately combined with internal remedies [24]. Advancements in pharmaceutical techniques have improved the quality and consistency of homeopathic topical formulations, enhancing patient acceptability and therapeutic outcomes. Continuing education on the rational use of these applications remains important for practitioners [25].

**Conclusion**

External applications in homeopathy, though secondary to internal treatment, hold valuable therapeutic potential, especially for acute, local, and superficial conditions. Their judicious use, grounded in classical homeopathic principles, can enhance healing, provide symptomatic relief, and complement systemic therapy. Awareness of their indications, benefits, and limitations ensures their effective and safe integration into holistic homeopathic practice.

**References**


1. Hahnemann S. Organon of Medicine. 6th ed. Boericke W, translator. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, c2002. p. 284-291.
2. Banerjea SK. External Applications in Homoeopathy. Kolkata: Narayana Publishersc, 2008.
3. Clarke JH. A Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica. Vol. 1. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishersc, 2005.
4. Tyler ML. Homoeopathic Drug Pictures. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishersc, 2004.
5. Sankaran R. The Spirit of Homeopathy. Mumbai: Homeopathic Medical Publishers, c1999. p. 120-130.
6. Boericke W. Pocket Manual of Homeopathic Materia Medica. 9th ed. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, c2006. p. 15-20.
7. Kent JT. Lectures on Homeopathic Philosophy. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, c2003. p. 134-145.
8. Ullman D. The Homeopathic Treatment of Acute and Chronic Diseases. 2nd ed. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, 2008.
9. Hahnemann S. The Chronic Diseases. Boericke W, translator. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, c2003. p. 200-210.
10. Bell IR, Koithan M. Integrative Homeopathy. Am J Homeopath Med. 2012;105(2):156-168.
11. Phatak SV. Materia Medica with Repertory. Mumbai: Popular Prakashan, 2005.
12. Boericke W. Materia Medica with Repertory. 12th ed. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, 2015.
13. Hahnemann S. Chronic Diseases. Hull W, translator. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, 2004.
14. Bhatia S. Homeopathy in Practice. New Delhi: CBS Publishers, 2011.
15. Kent JT. Repertory of the Homoeopathic Materia Medica. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, 2005.
16. Sankaran R. The Substance of Homeopathy. Mumbai: Homeopathic Medical Publishers, 1998.
17. Tyler ML. Homoeopathic Drug Pictures. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, 2004.
18. Clarke JH. Dictionary of Materia Medica. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, 2005.
19. Boericke W. Pocket Manual of Homeopathic Materia Medica and Repertory. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, 2006.
20. Phatak SV. Materia Medica with Repertory. Mumbai: Popular Prakashan, 2005.
21. Ullman D. The Homeopathic Treatment of Acute and Chronic Diseases. 2nd ed. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, 2008.
22. Sankaran R. The Spirit of Homeopathy. Mumbai: Homeopathic Medical Publishers, 1999.
23. Bell IR, Koithan M. Integrative Homeopathy. Am J Homeopath Med. 2012;105(2):156-168.
24. Banerjea SK. External Applications in Homoeopathy. Kolkata: Narayana Publishers, 2008.
25. Vithoulkas G. The Science of Homeopathy. 2nd ed. New Delhi: B. Jain Publishers, 2002.



**How to Cite This Article**

Umath VS, Sharma SK. Understanding external applications in homoepathy: A review. International Journal of Homoeopathic Sciences. 2025;9(2):615-617.