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Dr. Puneet Garg
MD (Hom), Professor,
Department of Paediatrics,
Bakson Homoeopathic Medical
College, Greater Noida, Uttar
Pradesh, India

Dr. Kanika Kaur
MD (Hom) in Clinical
Psychology, Associate
Professor, Department of
Pathology,
Bakson Homoeopathic Medical
College, Greater Noida, Uttar
Pradesh, India

A homoeopathic perspective on nephrotic syndrome: Clinical understanding and therapeutic approach

Puneet Garg and Kanika Kaur

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Abstract

Nephrotic Syndrome (NS) is a clinical condition characterized by proteinuria, hypoalbuminemia, hyperlipidemia, and edema. It is associated with various primary glomerular diseases and systemic conditions. In modern medicine, management primarily involves corticosteroids, immunosuppressants, and supportive therapy. However, long-term pharmacological treatment often brings adverse effects, especially in children. Homoeopathy offers a gentle and individualized approach that can help manage symptoms, reduce relapses, and potentially address the miasmatic background of the disease. This article reviews the pathophysiology of Nephrotic Syndrome and highlights its homoeopathic management based on classical principles.

Keywords: Nephrotic syndrome, proteinuria, homoeopathy, miasm, individualized treatment, chronic disease

Introduction

Nephrotic Syndrome is a renal disorder characterized by damage to the glomerular basement membrane, leading to massive proteinuria (>3.5g/day), hypoalbuminemia, and edema. It affects both adults and children but is more prevalent among paediatric populations, particularly between ages 2 and 6.

Homoeopathy, a system of medicine founded by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, focuses on holistic and individualized treatment. Given its non-toxic and patient-centric nature, it may serve as a supportive or alternative approach in chronic cases like Nephrotic Syndrome, especially in steroid-dependent or frequently relapsing patients.

Pathophysiology of nephrotic syndrome

NS results from increased permeability of the glomerular capillary wall, usually due to:

- Minimal Change Disease (MCD) - Most common in children.
- Focal Segmental Glomerulosclerosis (FSGS)
- Membranous Nephropathy
- Systemic diseases - such as lupus, diabetes, or infections.

The protein loss leads to decreased oncotic pressure and consequent fluid retention and edema. Hyperlipidemia results from hepatic compensation for protein loss.

Clinical features

- Generalized pitting edema (starting from the face, especially around eyes)
- Frothy urine due to protein
- Fatigue, anorexia
- Weight gain due to fluid retention
- Recurrent infections (due to immunoglobulin loss)
- Possible thromboembolic complications

Diagnosis

- **Urine examination:** Proteinuria, lipiduria
- **Blood tests:** Hypoalbuminemia, elevated cholesterol
- **Renal biopsy:** For histopathological confirmation (especially in adults)

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Puneet Garg
MD (Hom), Professor,
Department of Paediatrics,
Bakson Homoeopathic Medical
College, Greater Noida, Uttar
Pradesh, India

Conventional management overview

- **Steroids:** Prednisolone remains the mainstay
- **Immunosuppressants:** Cyclophosphamide, cyclosporine, tacrolimus
- **Supportive care:** Diuretics, albumin infusions, ACE inhibitors, statins

Homoeopathic Management**Miasmatic background**

Nephrotic Syndrome has a dominant sycotic and psoric miasm, with a tubercular miasmatic tendency in relapsing or

degenerative cases. Miasmatic evaluation is essential in chronic or relapsing cases.

Individualization and totality of symptoms

Case taking must consider

- Constitutional makeup
- Mental and emotional symptoms
- Past history of infections, vaccinations, suppressions
- Familial predispositions

Frequently indicated remedies

Remedy	Indications
Apis mellifica	Edema with stinging pain, thirstlessness, worse heat
Arsenicum album	Restlessness, burning pains, edema with anxiety
Berberis vulgaris	Radiating renal pain, bubbling sensation in kidneys
Cantharis	Intense burning during urination, hematuria
Digitalis purpurea	Weak heart, irregular pulse, urinary suppression
Mercurius solubilis	Offensive sweat, thirst, swollen tongue
Phosphorus	Pale, waxy face, increased thirst, degenerative changes
Terebinthina	Albuminous urine, fetid breath, nephritis symptoms

Case management approach

- **Acute phase:** Symptomatic prescription with drainage remedies (if required).
- **Chronic phase:** Constitutional prescription based on totality.
- Nosodes (e.g., Tuberculinum, Medorrhinum) considered when indicated by history and symptomatology.
- Lifestyle and dietary counseling as part of holistic care.

Research and Evidence

Although large-scale clinical trials are limited, several case reports and small observational studies demonstrate the potential of individualized homoeopathic treatment in managing paediatric and adult Nephrotic Syndrome, reducing relapse frequency and dependency on steroids.

Discussion

Homoeopathy offers a complementary role in managing Nephrotic Syndrome, especially in:

- Reducing steroid dependence
- Managing relapses
- Improving immunity
- Addressing psychological and constitutional predisposition

Challenges remain in establishing objective markers for improvement and gaining mainstream clinical acceptance due to a lack of large-scale studies.

Conclusion

Homoeopathy, grounded in individualized, holistic principles, may offer a safe and effective adjunct or alternative in the management of Nephrotic Syndrome. Collaborative research and clinical documentation are essential to validate its efficacy and integrate it with conventional care models.

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