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Pandemic COVID-19: Homeopathic prevention and treatment experiences

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Abstract

Coronavirus disease COVID-19 caused by recently identified Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), causes pneumonia-like symptoms such as fever, dry cough, and breathlessness. Due to lack of definitive treatment, physicians worldwide started exploring repurposed drugs, but, without any major breakthrough. Homeopathy has a history of offering preventive as well as curative medication in earlier epidemics and pandemics. Four cases of COVID-19 were treated with homeopathy alongside the standard care provided by the Hospital to which they were admitted. Two out of the four cases were high-risk patients with co-morbidity. Three classic cases of prevention of COVID-19 in very close contact has also been mentioned. All four cases including the high-risk cases of COVID-19 recovered fully without any complications and prevention was achieved in close contact cases with the use of Homeopathy. Learnings thereof have been discussed for larger further studies to explore the Homeopathic offerings to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19, SARS-CoV-2, Pandemic, Hydroxychloroquine, Homeopathy, Homoeopathy, Arsenic Alb, Belladonna, Camphora, Aconit

Introduction

A large family of viruses, that are known to cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) belongs to Coronavirus family [2]. The disease caused by recently identified SARS-CoV-2 is known as coronavirus disease COVID-19 [3], where CO refers to Corona, VI refers to Virus, D refers to Disease and 19 refers to year 2019 in which this was first reported.

Background: On December 31st, 2019, a strange new pneumonia of unknown cause was reported to the Chinese World Health Organisation (WHO) Country office [4]. A group of these cases originally appeared in wet market of Wuhan, a city in the Hubei Province of China. These infections were found to be caused by a new coronavirus which was given the name “2019 novel coronavirus” (2019-nCoV) [1]. It was later renamed as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) by the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) [5] and was announced by WHO as the new name of virus on 11th of February 2020 [6]. It was declared as Pandemic by WHO on 11th of March 2020 [6].

Epidemiology: As of 1 May 2020, more than 3.26 million cases of COVID-19 have been reported in 187 countries and territories, resulting in more than 233,000 deaths. Also more than 1.02 million people have recovered in the world [7]. India reported its first case on 30th Jan 2020 in Kerala [8] and in Bhopal’s first case was reported on 22nd March 2020 [9]. As of 1 May 2020, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have confirmed a total of 35,043 cases, 8,889 recoveries (including 1 migration) and 1147 deaths in the country [10].

Classification: Six Species of human coronaviruses are known, with one species subdivided into two different strains, making seven strains of human coronaviruses altogether [11].

- Four human coronaviruses produce symptoms that are generally mild [12]:
 1. Human coronavirus OC43 (HCoV-OC43), β -CoV
 2. Human coronavirus HKU1 (HCoV-HKU1), β -CoV
 3. Human coronavirus 229E (HCoV-229E), α -CoV
 4. Human coronavirus NL63 (HCoV-NL63), α -CoV

- Three human coronaviruses produce potentially severe symptoms ^[12]:
1. Middle East respiratory syndrome-related coronavirus (MERS-CoV), β -CoV
 2. Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus (SARS-CoV), β -CoV
 3. Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), β -CoV

Symptoms: The coronavirus can be spread from person to person through small droplets from the nose or mouth, which are expelled when a person with COVID-19 coughs, sneezes, or speaks. These droplets do not travel far and quickly sink to the ground. So, it is important to stay at least 1 to 2 meter (3 to 6 feet) away from others ^[13].

- The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, dry cough, and tiredness.
- Some patients may have aches and pains, nasal congestion, sore throat or diarrhoea.
- Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like high blood pressure, heart and lung problems, diabetes, or cancer, are at higher risk of developing a serious illness.

Homeopathy was discovered by a German Physician, Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843), in the late eighteenth century ^[14]. The central tenet of homeopathy is that "like cures like" (in Latin: *similia similibus curentur*), in a holistic approach to the totality of the patient's symptoms ^[15]. It treats the patients not only through holistic approach but also considers individualistic characteristics of the person. In this situation when there is no particular medicine/treatment or vaccine for COVID-19, only symptoms are known to us, Homeopathy found to be effective for the prevention of this global public health emergency of COVID-19 pandemic disease.

Close contact defined by USCDC as being within approximately 6 feet (2 meters) of a COVID-19 case; close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or sharing a healthcare waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case ^[16].

Aim and objectives

The primary objective was to identify the usefulness of homeopathic medicines for preventing and treating of COVID-19.

Materials and Methods

Lockdown: India announced its lockdown on 25 March 2020^[17], Bhopal the place where all the cases discussed in

this case series were also under complete lockdown. Under lockdown, newer cases were being diagnosed every day. Therefore, these cases were treated virtually.

Homeopathic Prevention: The Centre Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH), Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India dated 29/01/2020 ^[18] & 06/03/2020 ^[19] issued advisory saying Homeopathic medicine Arsenic 30 one dose empty stomach daily for three days could be taken as prophylactic medicine against Coronavirus infections.

Case Identification, Diagnosis & Prescription: Our old patients and acquaintance kept calling us on phone for advice on prevention, pandemic fear, anxiety, etc. Among some of our old patients, who received Arsenic 30 one dose empty stomach daily for three days, taken as prophylactic medicine against Coronavirus infections as per ministry's advisory, two were found to be positive on RT-PCR (Reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction) for presence of SARS-CoV-2 in their nasopharyngeal swab ^[20] and were consequently hospitalized. They were tested by the local government administration for positive contact history. These patients were constantly in touch and received our consultation via phone call and procured suggested medicine from the local homeopathic pharmacies, which were exempt from lockdown. Three close contacts of one patient amongst the two of above said cases received homeopathic preventive prescription via phone consultation. Two other hospitalized cases positive on RT-PCR for the presence of SARS-CoV-2 in their nasopharyngeal swab were retrospective reported of Homeopathic self-medication, who were interviewed in detail for understanding COVID-19 and homeopathic learnings thereof.

Homeopathic treatment: Keynote prescription was the way of choosing the remedy. The keynote is simply the predominating symptom or feature which directs attention to the totality. There is usually something peculiar in the case, some prominent feature or striking combination of symptoms that directs the attention to a certain drug ^[21] Homeopathic medicines were verified from Homeopathic Materia Medica by Boericke ^[22] and Allen ^[23]. Single medicine was prescribed as per Law of Similia ^[24].

Several other cases of Fever and the upper respiratory tract were also successfully treated during this pandemic, but, they are not reported here for the lack of positive SARS-CoV-2 test. Symptom and the corresponding medicine that helped in cure has been mentioned below Table No.1 and these were keynote prescription.

Table 1: Symptom and the corresponding medicine that helped in cure has been mentioned below

Symptom	Medicine*
Fear of pandemic, fear of death, with or without fever.	Arsenic 30 thrice a day.
Sudden onset of any symptom with fear of death.	Aconite 30 thrice a day.
Sudden onset of symptoms with congestion.	Belladonna 30 thrice a day.
Fever with muscular pain, with or without cough.	Bryonia 30 thrice a day.
Deeper/Bone pain with or without fever and flu-like symptoms.	Eupatorium 30 thrice a day.
Dry cough, itching burning throat with dryness.	Wyethia 30 thrice a day.
Flu-like symptoms with extreme weakness	Gelsemium 30 thrice a day.

* To be repeated more frequently based on the severity of symptoms, the dose was reduced as the patient improved.

Standard treatment: As we use homeopathic medicines as an adjuvant, so standard treatment protocol advised by the

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) was also taken by the COVID-19 positive patient simultaneously ^[25].

Follow-up: All the patients continued the follow-ups till further review. During follow-up, changes in the signs and symptoms were noted, and next higher potency of the same medicine was administered, till improvement ensued.

Case Reports

Case 1

A 48-year-old female, with a history of Hypertension, Deviated Nasal Septum and obesity (considered to be high-risk for COVID-19) sought consultation.

- She had a contact history with COVID-19 positive patient
- Preventive: She took *Arsenic 30*, one dose, empty stomach, daily for 3 days as per the ministry’s advisory, even before being exposed to the COVID-19 case.
- Yoga: She performed Pranayama daily.
- She was on Vit C, D, Zinc supplement.

Prescription on April 03, 2020

When the sample was collected on April 03, 2020, she felt

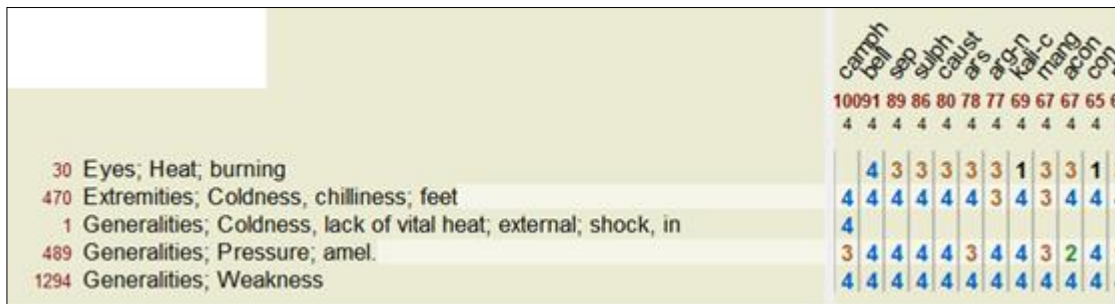


Fig 1: Complete Repertory based repertorisation in Complete Dynamics Software.

5th day April 07, 2020: Onwards she becomes asymptomatic.

6th day April 18, 2020: On testing negative for SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19), she was finally discharged healthy from the hospital.

Case 2

A 50-year-old Male, had no Co-morbidity.

- **Preventive:** He took *Arsenic 30*, one dose, empty stomach, daily for 5 days, 2 days more than ministry’s advisory, even before being exposed to COVID-19 case.
- He was found to be SARS-CoV-2 Positive (RT-PCR) on April 05, 2020.
- Yoga: He practiced Walking & Pranayama daily.

Prescription on April 06, 2020

On testing positive the patient spoke to us the next day, he had no symptoms only that he had very mild hoarseness, which he usually had all through the year. The patient was anxious about the new disease and by the calls that flooded when friends and family started calling. *Camphora 200*, BD, was prescribed till further review.

The patient was hospitalized. In the hospital, he received Hydroxychloroquine 400 mg BD, Azithromycin 500 mg on for 7 days. (As told by the patient).

Follow-up, observations, and prescriptions

2nd consultation on April 18, 2020: He was tested negative

weakness and wanted to lie down. *Arsenic 200*, 3 hourly was prescribed.

Follow-up, observations, and prescriptions

2nd consultation on April 04, 2020: She had a Burning of eyes. And was tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. She had a short duration of sleep and continued to work even after testing positive.

3rd day on April 05, 2020: She had a Blood streak once in the morning from nasal blowing. She was hospitalized, where she took only two doses of Hydroxychloroquine 400 mg and denied completing the standard course recommended by ICMR for positive patients.

4th consultation on April 06, 2020: We were informed about the result of (COVID-19) being positive. Feet cold and she wanted to press them to feel better. Indicated medicine *Camphora 1M* TDS was prescribed for 5 days.

on April 18, 2020 and was subsequently discharged healthy from the hospital.

Case 3, 4, 5

Three close contacts of Case 2 (that is detailed as above) 1. 45-year-old wife, 2. elder son 09 years, 3. younger son 07 years. They had no Co-morbidity.

Prescription on April 02, 2020

Before Case 2 being diagnosed positive, all the three close contacts of Case 2 were given *Arsenic Album 30* as per the ministry’s advisory.

Follow-up, observations, and prescriptions

2nd consultation on April 05, 2020: Case 2 nasopharyngeal swab sample for RT-PCR test was collected on April 02, 2020 and the Positive report for SARS-CoV-2 came on April 05, 2020. During this period Case No.4 lead a normal routine with his family, like playing in the garden with kids, chasing them, hugging & cuddling them etc. After the report came in, the wife got terrified and the fear of pandemic set in. She and her children continued *Arsenic 30*, thrice, daily.

3rd consultation on April 07, 2020: Two days later on April 07, 2020, she and her two sons even after such a close contact tested negative for SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19).

Case 6

A 62-year-old Male, reported no Co-morbidity, but, was found to have hypertension on examination. He was obese. (high-risk for COVID-19)

- He had close contact history with COVID-19 positive

patient and he found to be SARS-CoV-2 positive on March 25, 2020, and was subsequently hospitalized the same day.

- Preventive: On advice of acquaintance he took Arsenic 30 thrice daily for three days before being diagnosed.
- Yoga: He performed Pranayama daily.

Prescription on March 26, 2020

Some people and social media posts criticised for gross negligence and not taking enough precautions and endangering others. This caused severe mental turmoil to him and his blood pressure raised to 160/110 mm of Hg. He was prescribed *Enalapril 5 mg* BD as a measure to control his blood pressure by the hospital’s attending physician. In the hospital, he received Hydroxychloroquine 400 mg BD, Azithromycin 500 mg for 7 days. (As told by the patient).

Follow-up, observations, and prescriptions

2nd day March 27, 2020: While he was mentally upset, the next day morning he felt weary and took temperature and found it to be raised to 100°F. The patient is an amateur homoeopath and thus started taking *Aconite 30 with Belladonna 30* alternately every hour. By evening his fever subsided and he becomes asymptomatic. His Blood Pressure was under control.

10th day April 03, 2020: He was found to be negative for (COVID-19) 13 days later on April 03, 2020 and subsequently discharged from the hospital.

Case 7

A 26-year-old Female, had no Co-morbidity. Daughter of Case 6.

- She had an international travel history.
- Preventive: On advice of her father she took Arsenic 30 thrice daily for three days on reaching back to Bhopal (India) from abroad March 18, 2020.

- Yoga: She performed Pranayama daily.

Prescription on March 20, 2020

She developed fever, cough, and sore throat while she was taking *Arsenic 30* thrice a day.

Follow-up, observations, and prescriptions

3rd day March 22, 2020: Her nasopharyngeal swab tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) the local administration rushed her to the hospital. She developed Anosmia (Loss of sense of smell), Ageusia (Loss of sense of taste) and slight breathlessness.

In the hospital, she received Hydroxychloroquine 400 mg BD, Azithromycin 500 on for 7 days. (As told by her father).

6th day March 25, 2020: The above Case 6 is the father of Case 7. So, on hearing that her father testing positive for SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19), she panicked and was very fearful for her father’s health, therefore, offered religious prayers and started reading religious book Bhagwat Geeta. Her father was also admitted to the same hospital, therefore, he started giving her *Aconite 30 with Belladonna 30* alternately every hour.

7th day March 26, 2020: Her fever went off, other symptoms subsided and she improved every day.

13th day April 03, 2020: She was tested negative and was subsequently discharged healthy from the hospital.

Results

With treatment Case 1 tested negative for SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) on 13th day. Similarly, Case 2 tested negative on the 14th day, Case 6 tested negative on the 9th day and Case 7 tested negative on the 12th day and were subsequently discharged the next day from the hospital. For details refer to below Table No.2.

Table 2: For details refer to below

Case	Age	Sex	Date of Beginning of symptoms	Condition at the time of admission Stable/Critical/Any other	Major Symptoms and Signs at the time of admission	Any other associated Chronic Medical Condition	Date of sample collection	Result of Sample	Date of result MM/DD/YY	Date of Admission	Remark (Recovered / Death / Critical / Positive / Negative / Discharged)
1	48	F	NA	Stable	NIL	HTN	03.04.20	Positive for COVID-19	04.04.20	05.04.20	Discharged on 18.04.2020
2	50	M	NA	Stable	NIL	NIL	02.04.20	Positive for COVID-19	05.04.20	07.04.20	Discharged on 18.04.2020
6	62	M	NA	Stable	NIL	NIL	24.03.20	Positive for COVID-19	25.03.20	25.03.20	Discharged on 03.04.2020
7	26	F	20-03-20	Stable	Fever, Cough, Sore throat	NIL	21-03-20	Positive for COVID-19	22-03-20	22.03.20	Discharged on 03.04.2020

Case 1 even after being high-risk COVID-19 did not take any modern medicine drug other than mere two doses of Hydroxychloroquine, the patient fully recovered with homeopathic intervention without any complications. Age, hypertension, and obesity made Case 6 a high-risk COVID-

19 patient, but, he still recovered in a mere 10 days without any complication. Please note Case 2, 6, 7 received homeopathy alongside standard care protocol Hydroxychloroquine 400 mg BD, Azithromycin 500 mg on for 7 days as advised by the Indian Council of Medical

Research (ICMR) [25].

Case 3, 4, 5 received preventive Homeopathic medicine, & even after being a very close contacts of Case 2 (Wife and two sons) tested negative on April 07, 2020 for SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19).

All the cases recovered without any complications. And are still healthy and have resumed their normal routine.

Discussion

Arsenic 30 has been reported in the literature as a useful medicine for the prevention of COVID-19 [26-28] and also advised by CCRH and Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India [19]. There are no reported adverse effects or complications in the patients.

On comparing the duration of illness with improvement outcome, it is observed that similitum whether *Arsenic Album*, *Camphor*, *Aconite* or *Belladonna* all were effective in preventing the severe symptoms of COVID-19 and found to be effective in full recovery of COVID-19. It is therefore suggested that more studies should be undertaken, to further ascertain the usefulness of homeopathy in the treatment of COVID-19 patient, as adjuvant or standard therapy.

The debate of Genus Epidemicus continues, Homeopathic physicians world over have come up with different GE and all claiming their choice of GE to be the best. Here we see that the keynote prescription based on the clinical presentation is the best answer.

It would be nice to ascertain the action of homeopathic medicine, as to whether, they act via immunomodulatory effect, or via competitive receptor blocking or some other unknown mechanism. Such discovery shall give hope in working towards shaping medication in such a fashion that a targeted yet holistic approach can be adopted. Thus, eliminating the ambiguity.

Conclusion

The present cases bring to light the usefulness of homeopathic medicines as adjuvant therapy in treating COVID-19 patients. Also, as an aid in preventing the infection, and preventing the complications in high-risk COVID-19 patients. Randomized controlled trials with larger sample size may be undertaken for validation of the present results. Scientific investigation into the mode of action of Homeopathic intervention is also the need of the hour.

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