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The power of emotions: A deep dive into human feeling through homoeopathy

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Abstract

Emotions play an important role in human life, survival, decision-making, and social interactions. Emotions are complex psychological states that involve personal experiences, cultural context, bodily reactions to further stimuli, and communication. Homoeopathy, as a holistic approach, believes that mental and emotional states directly impact physical health. Emotions are the binding forces that add colour and spice to our lives by providing us with thrill, pleasure, excitement, and making our lives interesting. Emotions can either make or break an individual, varying from one person to another.

Dr. Kent and Dr. Hahnemann said, “get mentals first, you get similimum easily and near one.”¹. Homoeopathy case taking includes both the emotional and physical state of the individual. Overall, Emotions are essential for understanding yourself, interacting with others, and navigating the world.

Keywords: Emotions, psychology, homoeopathy, importance, theories, effects, repertory

Introduction

Every living organism—whether plant, animal, or human—possesses emotions that manifest in diverse ways. Dr. Hahnemann states in Aphorisms 210-230, that mental illness is not distinct from physical disease and can be cured with the same principles of healing. Similarly, Dr. M.L. Dhawale described emotions as “a feeling strong enough to influence the behaviour, thought, and physical well-being of an individual,” highlighting their connections to physical symptoms. He described that emotions are an integral part of human experience and cannot be separated from physical symptoms.

Emotional expressions are individualistic and depend on the type of stimulus from the environment. The individual expressions of emotion are unique ways in which people exhibit and experience emotions. These expressions can be verbal, non-verbal, physiological, or behavioural, and they can vary greatly from person to person. There are some examples of Emotional Reactions:

- Happiness can lead to jumping, whistling, or remaining cheerful.
- Grief may result in silence, crying, or fainting.

Every individual has a different reaction to a different situation.

Discussion

Types of Emotions

Positive Emotions are those emotions that we typically find pleasurable. They help an individual to feel fulfilled and content. These emotions may include joy, satisfaction, contentment, interest, happiness, and love. A person can feel happiness by receiving good news or on important occasions in their personal lives. Love can be romantic, familial, or platonic. Anticipating a fun event like a concert or vacation can lead to excitement. A sense of peace and satisfaction with a feeling of calmness after a productive day.

Negative Emotions are those that cause us distress and are generally associated with unpleasant experiences or outcomes. These would be fear, anger, disgust, sadness, rage, loneliness, melancholy, and annoyance. The negative emotions are important for our survival. Feeling of anger when someone mistreats you. Feeling fearful when you see something dangerous. Feeling of sadness after the loss of loved ones or failing at a goal. Feeling jealous when your partner spends time with someone else. Feeling guilty after lying or failing.

However, we see that different people develop certain fixed attitudes to approaching events.

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We term these as optimistic, that is, positive, or pessimistic, that is, negative attitudes.

Theories

Several theories of Emotions explain the nature, causes, and consequences of emotional experiences. It is interesting to understand how different psychologists have tried to understand the nature of emotions and came up with theories to explain their occurrence. One of the earliest theories is,

- **James-Lange Theory (1884):** The theory hypothesizes that physiological stimuli (arousal) cause the autonomic nervous system to react, which in turn causes individuals to experience emotion.²
- **Cannon-Bard Theory (1915):** This theory states that both the physiological arousal and the subjective experience of fear occur simultaneously in the thalamus³.
- **Schachter-Singer Theory (1962):** It often proposes that the combination of physiological arousal and cognitive interpretation determines emotions.⁴
- **Cognitive-Appraisal/Mediational Theory (1980):** It was developed by Richard Lazarus. This states that the cognitive process of appraisal precedes both the physiological arousal as well as the experience of emotions.
- **Attachment Theory (1951):** It was proposed by John Bowlby. This theory explains how emotional bonds form between a child and their caregiver. These early connections shape attachment patterns, which later influence the child's behaviour and stress management.⁵

Determinants of Emotions and Emotional Expression:

Emotions and their expressions are determined by the stimulus, by environment, or the person.

1. **Neurophysiological Basis:** When we study the localization of brain functions in Anatomy and Physiology, we come to know that emotional arousal is closely associated with a set of functional parts of the brain termed as Limbic System, which is responsible for processing Emotions, including the hippocampus, amygdala, and septum. The amygdala certainly plays an important role in the generation of fear as well as anger, while the hippocampus has been increasingly considered to play a significant role in cognition and memory.
2. **Cognitive Basis:** It focuses on how mental processes like perception, thinking, memory, and reasoning influence emotional experiences and expressions. Emotions are not just automatic responses to stimuli; they are also shaped by how individuals interpret and evaluate situations. This two-way interactivity between our thoughts and feelings needs to be understood at several levels. The speed and accuracy of information processing are affected when we are anxious or sad. But if we are cheerful, we are more flexible, creative, and are able to get more done.
3. **Socio-Cultural Basis:** This aspect emphasizes societal norms, cultural beliefs, and interpersonal relationships, which significantly impact emotional experiences. Like physical intimacy in public is acceptable in Western cultures, but even holding hands is frowned upon in Eastern cultures. Showing respect to elders by bowing

is a ritual common in India and Japan, while the same is never seen in the West. Japanese culture does not encourage an open expression of negative emotions like disgust, fear, and anger, while it is normal to do so in the United States.

Importance of Emotions

Emotions play a vital role in our lives, and their importance cannot be overstated.

- **Influence Decision-Making:** Emotions significantly impact our decision-making processes. It helps us to evaluate options, weigh risks, and benefits.
- **Regulate Behaviour:** Emotions help to regulate our behaviour by influencing our thoughts to take actions depending on the emotions we are feeling.
- **Interpersonal Relationships:** Emotions enable us to communicate effectively with others. They help us form connections, build trust, navigate conflicts, and shape our relationships.
- **Impact Physical Health:** Emotions have a profound impact on our physical health. Chronic stress, anxiety, and depression can lead to a range of health problems, including cardiovascular disease, compromised immune function, and digestive issues.
- **Enhance Creativity and Inspiration:** Emotions can inspire creativity, motivate us by broadening our minds to explore more new ideas.
- **Provide Meaning and Purpose:** Emotions enable us to experience joy, love, and fulfilment, and to cultivate a sense of direction and significance.
- **Influence Memory and Learning:** Emotions impact our memory and learning processes. Emotional experiences can enhance memory, and emotions can influence our motivation to learn.

Emotions are a fundamental aspect of the human experience, and their importance cannot be overstated. They contribute to our overall well-being, influencing our physical, mental, and emotional health.

Effects of Emotions on Mind and Body

Indian psychology is aware of the negative effects of emotions. There are 6 enemies of the mind according to scriptures like the Bhagwat Geeta, Buddhist texts, and verses of Adi Shankaracharya. These are Kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and matsara, which are lust, anger, greed, delusion, arrogance, and jealousy, respectively⁶. In the 62nd verse of Chapter 2 in the Bhagwat Geeta is written that 'While contemplating on the objects of the senses, one develops attachment to them. Attachment leads to desire, and from desire arises anger.'⁷

Emotions can affect the emotional state and actions. Emotions begin with an evaluation of internal and external cues that have particular relevance to an individual.⁸ For instance, people experiencing emotional imbalance might engage in avoidance behaviours like persistent fear, suppressed emotions, or sadness may lead to anxiety, depression, and confusion. As we know, our mind is closely connected to the endocrine system through the hypothalamus. So, it directly affects a person on the physical level. Like, stress can increase the heart rate and blood pressure. Emotions like stress, anxiety, and fear may lead to digestive disturbances like indigestion, too. A person most often gets a headache and disturbed sleep when stressed.

Representation of Emotions through Repertory & Materia Medica

We have learnt that the Repertory is an index of symptoms. Symptoms in the language of repertory are called rubrics. When we wish to find a perfect remedy for the patient, we should be able to identify all the shades of emotions and their effects on the body, and then search for the appropriate rubric in the repertory. We know that the immediate and prominent emotion is anger, and we are able to note the various shades of anger in repertory, like Indignation (a sense of shock with anger) and Frustration (anger with helplessness). Anger is a result of feeling disappointed and loss of love, faith, and relationships, which then would be the cause of emotional states.

Now, we will see how all this information can be converted into rubrics and repertorial language. These are some rubrics from Kent Repertory, as this repertory has more mental symptoms than any other repertory.

Table 1: The data presents emotional rubrics from Kent Repertory along with their respective page numbers.

Rubrics	Kent Repertory-Pg No.
Anger, indignation, from	2
Anxiety, future, about	7
Cheerful, sadness, with	11
Indifferent, loved ones, to	55
Love, with jealousy, anger, and incoherent talk	63
Sadness, weep, cannot	78

These are shades of emotions in the repertory. *Ignatia amara*, *Asteria rubens*, *Pulsatilla*, *Natrum muriaticum*, and *Sepia officinalis* are highly emotional remedies in homoeopathy. A 2012 Homoeopathic journal study⁹ found homoeopathic remedy *Pulsatilla* had anti-anxiety effects on mice.

Conclusion

The importance of Knowledge of Emotions for a Homoeopath

Emotion is an essential aspect of human behaviour and holds great significance in Homoeopathy. Hahnemann, in *Aphorism 216* of the *Organon of Medicine*, affirms that mental disorders can be discovered only through the keen observation of a physician¹⁰. Since Homoeopathy acknowledges the dynamic interrelationship between the mental, emotional, and physical spheres, a thorough understanding of the patient's emotional state provides essential guidance in case analysis. Remedies often possess characteristic emotional keynotes, and correlating these with the patient's expressions facilitates similimum remedy selection. Careful study of emotions during case-taking not only aids in uncovering the root cause of illness but also helps the homoeopath build a deeper, empathetic connection with the patient, thereby ensuring individualized treatment.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

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