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Homoeopathic management of migraine: A holistic and individualised approach

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Abstract

Migraine is a chronic, recurrent neurovascular disorder characterized by episodic headache associated with autonomic and neurological symptoms. It significantly affects quality of life and work productivity. Conventional management largely focuses on symptomatic relief, often requiring long-term analgesic use. Homoeopathy, based on the principle of individualisation and holistic treatment, aims at addressing the constitutional imbalance underlying migraine.

Keywords: Migraine, homoeopathy, individualisation, neurovascular disorder, headache

Introduction

Migraine is one of the most common primary headache disorders worldwide, usually appears before middle age, or occasionally in later life. It affects about 20% of females and 6% of males at some point in life. Migraine is not merely a headache but a complex neurological condition involving genetic, vascular, hormonal and psychological factors [1]. Homoeopathy views migraine as a constitutional disorder reflecting a deeper imbalance of the vital force, thus offering a curative rather than suppressive approach.

Definition

Migraine is defined as a primary headache disorder characterized by recurrent attacks of moderate to severe headache, typically unilateral and pulsating, aggravated by physical activity and associated with nausea, vomiting, photophobia and phonophobia [2].

Classification of Migraine

According to the International Classification of Headache Disorders (ICHD-3), migraine is classified as:

1. Migraine without aura [2]
2. Migraine with aura [2]
3. Chronic migraine [2]
4. Complications of migraine (status migrainosus) [2]
5. Probable migraine [2]
6. Episodic syndromes that may be associated with migraine (recurrent GIT disturbance) [2]

Etiopathogenesis

Vascular Theory: It was believed to result from intracranial vasoconstriction causing aura, followed by rebound vasodilatation of extracranial vessels leading to headache. The pulsatile nature of migraine and relief with vasoconstrictors support this theory.

Neurovascular Theory: Dysfunction of brainstem and vascular control centres initiates a cascade of neural and vascular events, ultimately producing headache.

Serotonin Theory: Serotonin (5-HT) plays a pivotal role in migraine pathogenesis. 5-HT2 receptor activation triggers migraine, while 5-HT1B activation inhibits CGRP release, reduces vasodilatation and relieves pain.

Triggering factors

1. Emotional stress and anxiety [3]

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2. Sleep deprivation [3]
3. Fasting [3]
4. Hormonal changes (menstruation, pregnancy) [3]
5. Dietary triggers such as excessive caffeine, alcohol [3]
6. Exposure to bright light and loud noise [3]

Clinical features

1. Unilateral, throbbing headache [1]
2. Nausea and vomiting [1]
3. Photophobia and phonophobia [1]
4. Visual or sensory aura (in some cases) [1]
5. Irritability, lethargy and difficulty concentrating [1]

Homoeopathic Approach to Migraine

Homoeopathy emphasizes on individualisation in migraine management. Each case is evaluated on the basis of:

- Location, sensation and character of pain
- Modalities of aggravation and amelioration
- Concomitant symptoms
- Mental and emotional state
- Constitutional makeup of the patient

Migraine is treated as a constitutional disease, not merely as a local complaint.

Miasmatic consideration

1. **Psora** – Functional headaches, mostly frontal, temporal, or vertex or may be of whole head [4]
2. **Sycotic** – Recurrent, periodic migraines with fixed patterns, mainly frontal and occasionally parietal. [4]
3. **Syphilitic** – Severe migraines with destructive or neurological features, mostly occipital or temporal or in the base of the brain. Headache often persist and may occur constantly to one side. [4]

Important Homoeopathic Medicines for Migraine

1. Belladonna

- **Indication:** Violent. Throbbing, congestive headache with heat, redness and pulsation [5, 6]
- **Symptoms:** Headache from suppressed catarrhal flow, from having hair cut, colds Mainly on right side
< light, noise, jar, lying down and in afternoon
> by pressure and semi-erect posture.

2. Nux vomica

- **Indication:** Migraine due to stress, overwork, irregular meals [5, 6]
- **Symptoms:** Pressing pain on vertex, as if a nail driven in.

Frontal headache, with desire to press the head against something.

< morning, odors, noise
> rest, warmth

3. Iris versicolor

- **Indication:** Migraine associated with severe nausea and vomiting [5, 6]
- **Symptoms:** Begins with a blur before eyes
Especially in right side
< rest, evening

4. Sanguinaria canadensis

- **Indication:** Violent. Throbbing. Congestive headache with heat, redness and pulsation [5, 6]
- **Symptoms:** Right-sided migraine
Periodic in nature
Begins in occiput and settles over right eye
Headaches return at climacteric; every seventh day

< Right side, touch
> sleep, vomiting

5. Natrum muriaticum

- **Indication:** Migraine triggered by grief or emotional suppression [5, 6]
- **Symptoms:** Sensation as if many little hammers are beating on brain
From sunrise to sunset
< morning on waking, after menses, sunheat
> sleep

6. Sepia

- **Indication:** Headache in terrible shocks at menstrual nisus, with scanty flow [5, 6]
- **Symptoms:** Stinging pain mostly left or in forehead
Associated with nausea and vomiting
. <indoors. lying on painful side
> pressure, after sleep.

7. Glonoinum

- **Indication:** Sunheadache with Congestion and pulsation [5, 6]
- **Symptoms:** head feels too large for skull
< sun, heat, gas/electric light
> uncovering head

8. Silicea

- **Indication:** Chronic sick headache [5, 6]
- **Symptoms:** ascending from nape of neck to vertex. and locating in one eye, especially the right
< draft of air, uncovering the head
> pressure, wrapping up warmly.

9. Gelsemium

- **Indication:** Bad effects from fright, fear, exciting news. [5, 6]
- **Symptoms:** Headache preceded by blindness
Dull, heavy ache, with heaviness of eyelids
> profuse urination, compression, lying with head high

General Management

1. Avoid Triggers: Stress, bright light, odors
2. Regular sleep and hydration
3. Avoid fasting
4. Gentle massage

Conclusion

Homoeopathy offers a holistic, safe and individualized approach in the management of migraine. By addressing the constitutional susceptibility and underlying miasmatic influences, homoeopathic treatment not only alleviates symptoms but also reduces recurrence. Migraine management through homoeopathy thus holds significant scope as a long-term therapeutic option.

Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest related to this study.

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