



International Journal of Homoeopathic Sciences

E-ISSN: 2616-4493
P-ISSN: 2616-4485
IJHS 2018; 2(4): 28-30
Received: 19-08-2018
Accepted: 21-09-2018

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Management of atopic dermatitis with homeopathy-a clinical study

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Abstract

Introduction: Atopic eczema also known as atopic dermatitis is an inflammatory non-communicable skin disorder. The skin is dry, scaly with cracks on visual examination making it prone to environmental allergens. There are few factors that worsen the presentation of dermatitis. The present study was conducted with the aim to evaluate the role of homeopathy in dermatitis.

Material and method: The present prospective observational study was conducted in the Department of homeopathy to determine the effect of homeopathic medications on the outcomes of dermatitis. The detailed history consisted of the following points; symptoms of mental depression, Confusion, difficulty in concentration, Irritability, Heat, night Sweats. Then randomly few selected subjects were given placebo and rest were continued on graphite for next 3 months. The outcomes and alteration in the symptoms were recorded manually during the entire study. All the data was arranged in a tabulated form and analysed statistically.

Results: Follow ups were regularly done at 15 days and a constant relief in symptoms was seen within 6 weeks amongst 75% of the patients. After shifting on to the placebo the satisfaction percentage was still high as 65%; 26 subjects receiving placebo. However, after the end of the study, 32 out of the 40 patients had no symptoms what so ever.

Conclusion: Successful management of dermatitis and depression by Graphites followed by Causticum, clearly shows the importance of mental symptoms than other physical characteristics in selecting medicine

Keywords: Dermatitis, depression, homeopathic

Introduction

Atopic eczema also known as atopic dermatitis is an inflammatory non-communicable skin disorder. The casual symptoms include itching, typical morphology, and occurrence of rash, chronic relapsing pattern, and also a history of "atopic diathesis". Its clinical appearance shows a distinct variation at different age groups and places. Itching is the most commonly associated feature. It is usually preceded by rash that might be severe, generally during night that is followed by inflammatory red to brownish coloured patches with small bumps. These patches may exudate fluid and crust is formed over them when scratched. They may occur wherever on the body, but they most commonly appear on the flexural surfaces of the joints like inner sides of elbows, knees, and ankles. The skin is dry, scaly with cracks on visual examination making it prone to environmental allergens. There are few factors that worsen the presentation of dermatitis. Environmental factors like staphylococcal skin infection, humidity, pollution, exposure to detergents and stress plays crucial role as a precipitating factor. Certain psychological and behavioural alterations do co-occur with dermatitis therefore called "neurodermatitis." [1-3] The aetiology for dermatitis is destruction of epidermal barrier destruction by immune system disharmony as a result of gene-environmental interaction. [4] Symptoms are related to negative thoughts like worthlessness, helplessness, hopelessness. Also there is reduced confidence, disturbed sleep, loss of appetite, and libido. All these symptoms have variable occurrence like few weeks to months. It is most commonly seen during fourth to fifth decade of life. [5] Stress is also a very crucial factor in depression. Recently, an immune system disruption hypothesis has also been proposed for neurobiology of depression namely; the immune-cytokine model of depression. [6] The present study was conducted with the aim to evaluate the role of homeopathy in dermatitis.

Material and Method

The present prospective observational study was conducted in the Department of

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Homeopathy to determine the effect of homeopathic medications on the outcomes of dermatitis. Ethical committee clearance was obtained from the institutional ethical board and all the subjects were informed about the study. A written consent was obtained from all in their vernacular language. The study was conducted for a period of 1 year and 40 subjects were enrolled in the study. All the subjects were analysed for the symptoms of dermatitis and a detailed history and status were recorded for the same. The detailed history consisted of the following points; symptoms of mental depression, Confusion, difficulty in concentration, Irritability, Heat, night Sweats, Perspiration, Odour issues, Eruption: Eczema, Discharge, scratching, Discharging glutinous, Itching, Constipation: Difficult in passing stools. Subjects were prescribed 'graphite' as the chief drug for the symptoms with different potencies of 30-1M accordingly during the first six months. Then randomly few selected subjects were given placebo and rest were continued on graphite for next 3 months. The outcomes and alteration in the symptoms were recorded manually during the entire study. During the last 3 months all the subjects were given 'graphite' as the regular medication. In subjects with relapse and very few effects causticum 200 was given in various dosage forms. All the data was arranged in a tabulated form and analysed statistically.

Results

In a total of 40 patients, 18 were female and 22 were male. (graph1). All the patients were divided into 4 groups according to age. Age group A 18-35 had the maximum 21 patients. Age group B of 36-45 had 10 patients. Age group C of 46-55 years had 6 patients and age group D of 55 and above had 3 patients. The most severe form of dermatitis was observed in the group B patients, where affected skin crusting was seen, and the discharge was very frequent. (graph2). Follow ups were regularly done at 15 days and a constant relief in symptoms was seen within 6 weeks amongst 75% of the patients. After shifting on to the placebo the satisfaction percentage was still high as 65%; 26 subjects receiving placebo. However, after the end of the study, 32 out of the 40 patients had no symptoms what so ever. Therefore, a success rate of 80% was recorded by the homeopathic study in the given population of patients. (Table1).

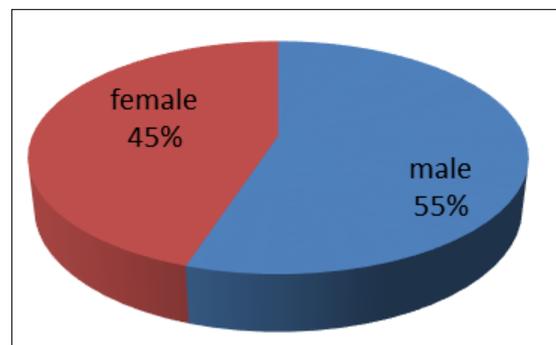
Table 1: The results of treatment in different groups

Treatment Duration	Relief IN Symptoms%	No Relief in Symptoms%
Initial treatment	30(75%)	10(25%)
Placebo	26(65%)	14(35%)
After placebo	32(80%)	8(20%)

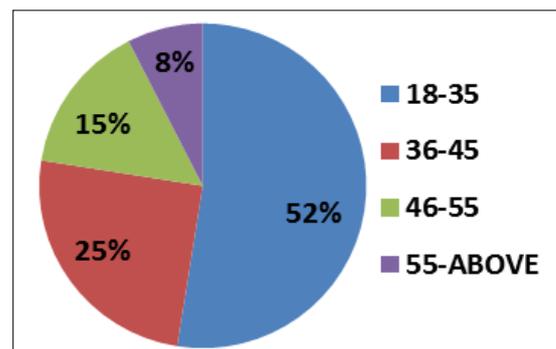
Discussion

After scrupulous analysis and with adequate consultation of Materia Medica, Graphites were chosen as the primary prescription. [7, 8] As an observation of 40 patients of dermatitis managed with homoeopathic medicines showed a great improvement in the frequency of skin affected areas and visual analogue scales. [9] In this study, all the patients were divided into 4 groups according to age. Age group a 18-35 had the maximum 21 patients. Age group B of 36-45 had 10 patients. Age group C of 46-55 years had 6 patients and age group D of 55 and above had 3 patients. The most severe form of dermatitis was observed in the group B

patients, where affected skin crusting was seen, and the discharge was very frequent. Follow ups were regularly done at 15 days and a constant relief in symptoms was seen within 6 weeks amongst 75% of the patients. After shifting on to the placebo the satisfaction percentage was still high as 65%; 26 subjects receiving placebo. However, after the end of the study, 32 out of the 40 patients had no symptoms what so ever. Therefore, a success rate of 80% was recorded by the homeopathic study in the given population of patients. Relapse in the skin symptoms like eczema worsened, itching and discharges increased with exudation and crusting initially, and became depressed later in 4th month. The patient's skin symptoms initially displayed incomplete remission and relapse on treatment with Graphites even when sufficient time was given by the drug to act. Causticum 200 was prescribed amongst the patients showing relapse and very mild action to graphites. Treatment with Causticum with increasing potencies 200, 1M was continued from middle 3 months. Initial development on dermatological symptoms and depressive symptoms was found with management by Causticum 200. The repetition of the drug with increasing the potencies was done as per the response following the homoeopathic philosophy. Miasmatic analysis of all the presenting symptoms were processed completely with the assistance of comparison of the chronic miasms, which clearly showed the mixed occurrence with predominance of psora. [10] As per the §183 -"Whenever the dose of the first medicine stops to have a beneficial action, a new examination of the disease must be introduced, the status morbi as it now is must be noted down, and a second homoeopathic drug selected in accordance with it, which shall exactly ensemble the present state, and one them shall be all the more suitable can then be found, as the group of symptoms has become larger and more complete." [11] It must be noted that Causticum is a complementary medicine of Graphites. [12]



Graph 1: Gender Variation



Graph 2: Age Group Differentiation

Conclusion

Homeopathy offers favourable outcome in the management of cases with dermatitis. Homeopathy provides individualised treatment to different subjects. Successful management of dermatitis and depression by Graphites followed by Causticum, clearly shows the importance of mental symptoms than other physical characteristics in selecting medicine and approves of the concept by Dr. Kent's Philosophy's second prescription.

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