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Effectiveness of homoeopathy in treatment of cholelithiasis: A retrospective study

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Abstract

Cholelithiasis or Gallstone is a very common problem among worldwide. In developed countries gallstones occurs in 15:7 ratio among females and males, showing female predominance, and 11% of overall prevalence. Gastro Intestinal Quality of Life Index rating (GQLI) scale is a tool which assess the quality of life in patients those who are suffering with gastrointestinal symptoms. Homoeopathy is a unique system of medicine based on law of similars. It is a unique method of treatment which treats patients with individualization.

Aims and Objective: Exploring the role of individualized homoeopathic medicines in treating cholelithiasis by using GIQLI rating scale.

Study design: Retrospective study.

Site: Patients who had visited Gastrointestinal Out Patient Department of National Homeopathy Research Institute in Mental Health, Kottayam,

Sample size: 12 diagnosed cases of cholelithiasis with 12 follow-ups.

Inclusion Criteria: Patients who had diagnosed with cholelithiasis and having minimum 12 follow-ups were included in this study.

Discussion: Out of 12 patients enrolled for the study, 10 (83.33%) were female and 2 (16.67%) were male. Lycopodium clavatum was indicated in 4 patients (33%), followed by Nux vomica 3 (25%), Bryonia alba 2 (16.5%), Sulphur 2 (16.5%), Calcarea carb 1 (9%). 9 (75%) patients in our study. The study also showed a higher prevalence in female (83%) than in males (17%).

Conclusion: Homoeopathic system of medicine treats the patient as a whole and not the disease, the totality of symptoms were considered in selection of medicine. The above study showed marvelous improvement which proves that homoeopathy is effective in treatment of cholelithiasis.

Keywords: Cholelithiasis, gastro intestinal quality of life index rating (GQLI) scale, homoeopathy

Introduction

Cholelithiasis or Gallstone is a very common problem among worldwide. In developed countries gallstones occurs in 15:7 ratio among females and males, showing female predominance, and 11% of overall prevalence. It affects mostly around age of 40, which increases as age advances. In Africa and Asia less prevalence is observed compared to other parts of the world. 4% of peoples were affected in India among total population^[1,2].

Gastro Intestinal Quality of Life Index rating (GIQLI) scale is a tool which assess the quality of life in patients those who are suffering with gastrointestinal symptoms. It is a 36 item questionnaire with 5 main domains which consists with symptoms of gastrointestinal tract, emotions, physical function, social behavior and treatment. Each item of question is scored between 0-4 depending on severity, and the total score may range between 0-144. The number of score is directly proportionate with the quality of life, which means the higher score denotes that the patient's quality of life is good^[3].

Presence of stone in the gall bladder is known as cholelithiasis and choledocholithiasis is a term used when the stone is present in common bile duct^[3].

Main predisposing factors which is responsible for stone formation are

1. Increase in secretion of cholesterol (obesity, old age, pregnancy and female gender)
2. Reduced gall bladder emptying (fasting, spinal cord injury, stasis in gall bladder and pregnancy)
3. Impaired bile salt secretion^[4,5].

Multiparous females and high socioeconomic status persons are at high risk in development of cholelithiasis. Sex hormones, especially increasing in level of oestrogen promote secretion of cholesterol in biliary tract causing stone formation.

Types of stones: Pigment stones (2-27%), cholesterol rich stones (37-86%) and mixed Stones^[3].

Patients may presents with right hypochondriac or epigastric pain (70%) which radiates to tip of right scapula or inter scapular region. Fever, vomiting, nausea and flatulency, indigestion with discomfort in abdomen after heavy meal (postprandial distress) may be associated symptoms^[6,7].

Main investigations to identify the cholelithiasis are CT, abdominal ultrasound, endoscopic ultrasound (to find out the structural changes inside the gastrointestinal tract and in adjacent organs) and MRCP (Magnetic resonance cholangiopancreatography) (special type of MRI to find out abnormalities in hepatobiliary and pancreatic systems)^[10].

Differential diagnosis for cholelithiasis includes gastroesophageal reflux disease, acute and chronic pancreatitis, angina pectoris and peptic ulcer disease^[14].

Cholelithiasis can cause complications like porcelain gallbladder, empyema of the gallbladder, acute pancreatitis, choledocholithiasis, gallstones ileus, fistula between gallbladder and duodenum, cancer of gallbladder and ascending cholangitis^[8,9].

General management for cholelithiasis comprising of increase in lecithin intake (wheat, soyabean, liver, egg), high fiber diet (vegetables, fruits), maintain minimal body weight and reduce saturated fats (butter, meat and other animal fats).

Homeopathy is a unique system of medicine based on law of similars. It is a unique method of treatment which treats patients with individualization. It also aims in gentle, rapid and permanent removal of symptoms in order to achieve a cure. Method of selection of remedy will be based on modality, cause, constitution, miasm and with totality of symptoms. Different methods of approaches had been adapted to manage cholelithiasis like Hahnemannian constitutional approach, Burnett's way of organopathic prescribing and nosological or therapeutic approach. Report by J H Clarke and Ellis Barker and quote from book by I. Watson, "A guide to the methodologies of homeopathy" states that exact similitum should be considered when totality is based on individualization. Several other studies also show that there is effectiveness of homeopathic medicines over cholelithiasis^[11,12].

Common homeopathic medicines used for gall stones are as follows

- 1. Aresnicum album:** Restlessness. Pain, all burning in nature. Great exhaustion. Restlessness. All complaints increase after cold drinks, physical exertion between 12-2 am. Fear of death with anxiety. Offensive putrid discharges. Burning pain relieved by heat. Sight of smell of food causes gastric complaints. Pain abdomen.
- 2. Belladonna:** Constant retching. Burning and constrictive pains. Active congestion. Flushed red skin more in face. Sensitive liver. Appendicitis with spasmodic pain in stomach. Over sensitiveness. Complaints more on movement, touch, draft of air. Better by sitting erect or standing.
- 3. Berberis vulgaris:** Bright red thick mucus in urine. Gall bladder colic. Severe constipation. Shifting type of pain in abdomen < pressure. Jelly like stools. Pain in renal angle. Pain more on standing and movement.
- 4. Cardus marianus:** Liver engorged. Gall-stones. Tongue, white centre with red intended edges. Crawling sensation, like the passage of a small body like a pea through a narrow canal on posterior side of liver extending to pit of stomach.
- 5. Chelidonium majus:** Sharp pain in abdomen which radiates to back. Pain in inferior angle of scapula. Thick yellow coated tongue. Flatulency due to colic. Vomiting and nausea better by drinking hot water. Pain more during movement, better by pressure.
- 6. China:** Tenderness in region of liver. Periodical pain more at 12 am. Conjunctiva and skin are yellow. Dark greenish hard stool with constipation. Pain in right hypochondrium. Gall bladder calculi.
- 7. Chionanthus:** Cold sweat with pain in forehead. Eructation bitter. Aversion to cover even though heat. Desire to pass stool with retching and nausea. Liver hypertrophy. Obstructive jaundice.
- 8. Colocynth:** Twitching and shortening of muscles. Intense neuralgia. Irritability and anger. Cutting, grinding, twisting pain in abdomen. Flatulence. Jelly like dysentery. Calf cramps. Complaints more while eating and drinking, anger and better by hard pressure, bending double.
- 9. Dioscorea:** Umbilical pain radiates to other parts. Paroxysmal, intense pain. Spasmodic neuralgic pain in liver. Complaints more while doubling, better by hard pressure.
- 10. Hepar sulph:** Craving for vinegar. Physical and mental over sensitiveness. Green and white stools associated with hepatitis. Colic due to gall stone.
- 11. Hydrastis Canadensis:** Cutting type of pain extending from liver region to right scapula. Yellow skin. Liver area so tender. Yellowish skin. Gall bladder catarrhal inflammation. Complaints more while lying on right side and back.
- 12. Iris versicolor:** Epigastric burning. Heart burn. Colic in region of gall stone. White dry coated tongue with red streak in the center.
- 13. Leptandra:** Jaundice. Tongue is yellow coated. Burning and dull aching pain in liver and gall bladder.
- 14. Lithium carb:** Bladder is so sore and sensitive. Gall stones. Redness in nose. Severe pain in ribs and ilium. Dull aching in region of liver.
- 15. Lycopodium:** Gallstones, pain in right kidney. Fear and anxiety. Ravenous hunger with nausea and vomiting. Hepatic abnormalities. Red sand like urine. Gastric distension with pain in right hypochondrium and lumbar regions. Complaints more while lying on right side and 4-8pm, better in open air and while taking warm foods.
- 16. Magnesium phosphoricum:** Distension of abdomen. Severe colicky and crampy pain in abdomen. Pain worse by cold and better by pressure, bending double and warmth.
- 17. Merc. Sol:** Furred moist tongue. Gallstones causes soreness in hepatic region. Jaundice. Stitching pain in liver area. Blood rushes suddenly into the head. Oppression of chest as if cannot able to take breath. Bad smell from sweat and in mouth. complaints more

due to warmth of bed and during night.

- 18. Nux vomica:** Irritation and hypersensitivity of all organs. Severe constricting pains with sensation as if pressure of stone; Gall stones. Flatulency. Constipation alternates with diarrhea. Nauseating feeling which is relieved by vomiting. Ailments due to spicy food, chronic intake of drug, alcohol consumption. Ineffectual urging to stool. Complaints more during stress, early morning, relieved by vomiting, rest and strong pressure.
- 19. Phosphorus:** Acute conditions of liver disorders and gall bladder calculi. Hepatic region so tender. Great thirst after vomiting. Extreme craving for ice cold drinks. Pain < lying on left side.
- 20. Podophyllum:** Pain in hepatic region which compels the patient to rub the area. Imprint of teeth in tongue with white or yellow coated. Clay coloured stool with constipation. Gall bladder pain and pain in bile duct. Pain > by warmth externally and forward bending.
- 21. Veratrum Album:** catarrh of gastric mucosa. sweat increased, with coldness in forehead. Pain takes the patient towards delirium state. Heaviness in region of liver associated with diarrhea and vomiting. Colic due to gall stone.^{15,16}

Materials and Methods

Methodology

Aims & Objective: To find out the role of individualized homoeopathic medicines in treating cholelithiasis by using GIQLI rating scale.

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Inclusion Criteria: Patients who had diagnosed with cholelithiasis and having minimum 12 follow-ups were included in this study.

Tool used: GIQLI rating scale.

Results

Table 1: Gender wise distribution of patients

Gender	No. of cases	Percentage
Male	02	16.67
Female	10	83.33

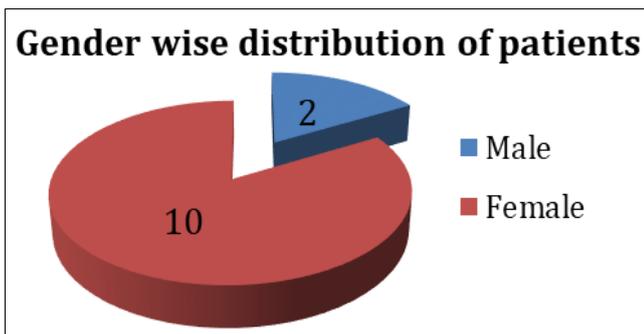


Fig 1: Gender wise distribution of patients

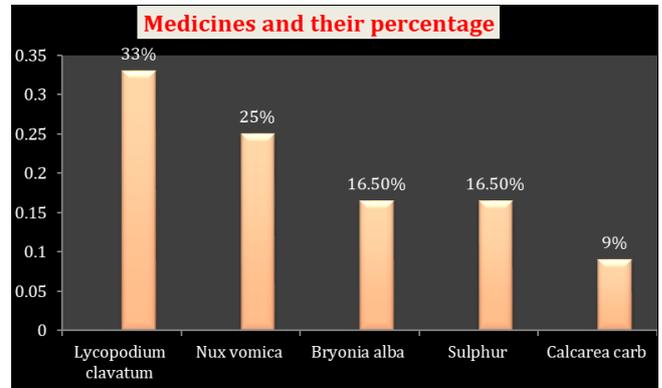


Fig 2: Indicated medicines and their percentage

Table 2: Mean ± SD of (GIQLI) scale score at various time points

Time point	Mean ± SD
Baseline	69.667±26.847
Third month	84.583±24.6
Sixth month	91.333±19.695
Ninth month	98.583±16.866
Twelth month	103.667±18.826

Table 3: Friedman Chi- squared test

Time point	Median(IQR)	Friedman Chi- squared	P value
Baseline	71.5(44.5,91.25)	29.042	<.001
Third month	91.5(72.25,100.25)		
Sixth month	91.5(78.75,102.5)		
Ninth month	94(83.5,112.5)		
Twelth month	104.5(88.75,118.5)		

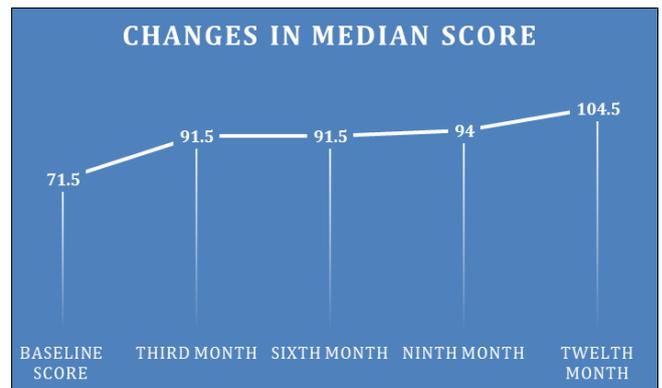


Fig 3: Changes in median score

Discussion

Cholelithiasis or Gallstone is a common problem which had been faced worldwide with overall prevalence of 11%. Conventional system of medicine has limited scope for conservative treatment of cholelithiasis, and cholecystectomy is considered as the gold standard treatment for symptomatic cholelithiasis

Out of 12 patients enrolled for the study, 10 (83.33%) were female and 2 (16.67%) were male. Lycopodium clavatum was indicated in 4 patients (33%), followed by Nux vomica 3(25%), Bryonia alba 2 (16.5%), Sulphur 2 (16.5%), Calcarea carb 1 (9%). 9 (75%) patients in our study. The study also showed a higher prevalence in female (83%) than in males (17%).

Except 1 case, all other cases showed a progressive improvement in GIQOL scoring. The Median scores at baseline, third month, sixth month, ninth month and twelfth month were considered for analysis.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted using STATCRAFT Version 3.0. The Mean \pm SD of age is 49.167 \pm 17.461. Friedman test was used compare the Median scores over a period of one year. The Median scores at baseline, third month, sixth month, ninth month and twelfth month were considered for analysis. $p < 0.05$ considered as statistically significant. Friedman test showed a statistically significant improvement in the Median score from 71.5 to 105.5 with $\chi^2 = 29.042$ and $p \leq 0.001$.

Conclusion

Homoeopathic system of medicine treats the patient as a whole and not the disease, the totality of symptoms were considered in selection of medicine. The above study showed marvelous improvement which proves that homoeopathy is effective in treatment of cholelithiasis.

Limitation

Considering the high prevalence of cholelithiasis in the community the sample size was small and the study must be done in larger group of patients.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

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