



International Journal of Homoeopathic Sciences

E-ISSN: 2616-4493

P-ISSN: 2616-4485

www.homoeopathicjournal.com

IJHS 2023; 7(2): 01-03

Received: 01-01-2023

Accepted: 03-02-2023

M Pravallika Sreekari

Intern, MNR Homoeopathic
Medical College, Sangareddy,
Telangana, India

N Bhavana

Intern, MNR Homoeopathic
Medical College, Sangareddy,
Telangana, India

Dr. Sreevidhya JS

Associate Professor,
Department of Obstetrics and
Gynaecology, MNR
Homoeopathic Medical
College, Sangareddy,
Telangana, India

Dr. Tummala Aarathi Reddy

Assistant Professor,
Department of Obstetrics and
Gynaecology, MNR
Homoeopathic Medical
College, Sangareddy,
Telangana, India

Corresponding Author:

M Pravallika Sreekari

Intern, MNR Homoeopathic
Medical College, Sangareddy,
Telangana, India

A review on homoeopathic management of acne vulgaris in young adolescent girls

M Pravallika Sreekari, N Bhavana, Dr. Sreevidhya JS and Dr. Tummala Aarathi Reddy

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26164485.2023.v7.i2a.800>

Abstract

Acne vulgaris is a chronic and multifactorial inflammatory disease of pilosebaceous follicles. It is extremely common in puberty and estimated to affect 90% of the adolescents. It causes cosmetic disfigurement and provokes many psychological problems in them. The consequences can be devastating leading to embarrassment, absenteeism, depression and overall reduction in the quality of life. Homoeopathic medicines have been found to be effective in alleviating the symptoms and also in improving the quality of life of the adolescence.

Keywords: Acne vulgaris, adolescents, psychological problems, quality of life, homoeopathy indications

Introduction

Acne vulgaris is a chronic inflammatory disease which is clinically characterized by seborrhea, formation of papules, comedones, pustules, cysts, nodules and scarring in some cases [2]. It is most severe in late teenagers. The pathogenic factors associated with development of acne are follicular hyperkeratinisation with hyper secretion of sebaceous glands, Propionibacterium colonization, hypersensitivity and chronic inflammatory reactions [2]. Small and non inflamed lesions can be slight annoying but those individuals who are suffering from severe inflammatory nodular acne suffer from both physical and psychological scar [3]. Acne negativity affects the quality of life. Acne is a skin disorder caused by a combination of factors such as hormones, food, climate, an irregular lifestyle, and stress.

Epidemiology

It is common skin condition affecting 9.4% of the global population. It is mostly seen in age group of 12 to 20 years. It can continue in variable periods in different individual. It spontaneously resolves by the age of 25 yrs but some people continue to suffer till the age of 40 yrs. Factors that induce or exacerbate acne vulgaris include endocrine causes like PCOS, Cushing syndrome etc, certain drugs, occupational exposures and genetic factors [4].

Pathogenesis

The key pathogenetic component in the development of acne is follicular epithelial hyperproliferation that leads to increased sebum production, colonization of the pilosebaceous ducts with Propionibacterium acnes which in turn causes inflammation, hyper-cornification and occlusion of the sebaceous ducts.

Acne may manifest as a symptom of an underlying hormonal disturbance. Androgen and progesterone both increase sebum excretion whereas oestrogen reduces it. Genetic factors are also said to be associated with the development of acne¹. Besides these the other factors that aggravate the occurrence are diet rich in fats, excess use of oily cosmetics, intestinal stasis and mechanical irritation of the lesions.

Clinical features of the development of acne

Comedone is the primary lesion of the acne which signifies as a dark, horny, follicular plug composed of dried sebum, epithelial cells and keratinous scales (white heads). Over the passage of time the sulphur content of the sebum is converted to sulphide turning it into a 'black head'.

Some comedones resolve with extraction of the discharge while some undergo inflammatory changes. In the earlier stage there is redness with development of a papule (acne papules). These are bright red, irregular in shape and tender on touch. Some papules involute while some suppurate to form pustules (acne pustulosa). Superficial pustules involute whereas deep take time. Firm, perifollicular nodule is formed which is called as 'acne indurate' which eventually gets absorbed completely or partially. In some cases it turns into a cyst called as 'acne cystica' which tend to persist discharging thin purulent fluid. Scar formation with pits is a common sequel of acne which can be very disabling and disfiguring. Irregular deep scars may leave hypertrophic and sometimes keloidal scars [5].

There is a rare and severe form of acne called as 'acne fulminans' in which acne lesions suddenly become inflamed. The person suffers from fever, arthralgia and systemic inflammation.

Another type of acne called as 'acne excoriee' is seen in teenage girls with underlying psychological problems. There is self inflicted excoriation due to compulsive picking of pre-existing or imagined acne lesions [1].

Repertorial view

Kent repertory: Face – eruptions – acne

BBCR repertory: Face – acne – comedo

Boericke repertory: Face – Eruptions – acne simplex

General management of acne

Healthy lifestyle plays a key role in general management of acne.

This includes

1. Daily physical activity
2. Healthy food intake
3. Consumption of adequate quantity of water
4. Yoga and meditation.

Along with these, adequate sleep is also necessary which reduces the psychological stress and improves the quality of life.

Some general measures like

1. Avoid touching your face
2. Wash your face frequently
3. Avoid popping the pimples are to be followed.

Homoeopathic management

According to a review of the literature, homoeopathic medicines are helpful in the treatment of acne vulgaris. Homeopathy treats acne from the inside out, treating several causative conditions along the way to avoid recurrence. Rather than suppressing acne, these medications treat the underlying cause. In instances of Acne Vulgaris, deep acting constitutional remedies based on the totality of symptoms may provide a safer, more effective therapy.

Hepar sulph

This suits to people with unhealthy skin where there is marked tendency to suppuration. Inclination to have eruptions and glandular swellings, with great sensitiveness to all external impressions. There is more tendency to acne in young adolescents [6].

Kali bromatum

This suits to fleshy people inclined to obesity. It is clinically well indicated in acne rosacea, acne indurata, acne simplex with bluish red pustules commonly seen on face, chest, shoulders. These pustules later leaves unsightly scars. Affections are often seen in young fleshy persons of gross habits [7].

Pulsatilla

This remedy is a predominant female remedy. It suits to mild, gentle, yielding and weeping disposition. It's indications are urticaria, measles, acne. Acne which occur during puberty can be dealt with this remedy [6].

Phosphoric acid

It suits to young people who grow very rapidly and are mostly affected by over exertion of mind and body. Debility is more marked. This is indicated in patients who are prone to acne and blood boils. Pus is seen which is very offensive. More tendency towards abscess is seen [6].

Natrum mur

Here great disposition to weakness and weariness is seen. There is oversensitiveness to all external impressions. Face of the patient is oily and shiny as if it is greased. There is tendency to acne [6].

Graphites

It suits to patients who are fat with fair complexion and are having more tendency towards skin affections. Great inclination to pimples and acne. Itching of pimples is seen with a sticky exudation oozing out. Unhealthy skin which is more prone to suppuration is seen [6].

Sepia

It is more suitable to women with yellow complexion and having bearing down sensation. Yellow complexion with blotches on face. Eruptions on lips, about mouth and nose with itching is present [6].

Arctium lappa

It has immunostimulant and anti inflammatory effects. It is efficient in skin therapeutics and especially in treatment of acne. It is used for treating eruption on face, head and neck. It has affinity towards skin eruption and is clinically used for inveterate acnes which are worse on touch, spreading vesicular eruptions with itching and tearing pain. It has shown positive effects for acne treatment of inflammatory type [6].

Arsenicum bromatum

It is a great anti psoric and anti-syphilitic remedy used widely for various skin affections. It is useful in cases of acne rosacea, in young people with violent papules on nose.

Psorinum

Pimples of oily face, Dirty dingy look of the skin, Acne with intolerable itching. Pimples which excoriate the glands with oozing of acrid fluid.

Conclusion

This review article is about the management of Acne vulgaris in adolescents and improving their Quality of life. Homoeopathic remedies can be used as stand alone

treatment in the management of Acne vulgaris. By following General measures mentioned above we can further prevent the recurrence of Acne vulgaris. Therefore by treating the acne we can improve their Quality of life as Acne has an impact over it ^[6].

Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

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How to Cite This Article

Sreekari MP, Bhavana N, Sreevidhya JS, Reddy TA. A review on homoeopathic management of acne vulgaris in young adolescent girls. International Journal of Homoeopathic Sciences. 2023;7(2):01-03.

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