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A clinical study to evaluate the role of arsenicum bromatum in the management of acne vulgaris in young patients

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Abstract

Acne vulgaris is defined as chronic, multifactorial, inflammatory disease of pilo-sebaceous follicles, which occur commonly in young patients who attained their puberty⁶. A one year internee project was taken to study the effectiveness of Arsenicum Bromatum in managing acne in young girls. Here, in this article contains results obtained with the above mentioned clinical study.

Keywords: Acne vulgaris, arsenicum bromatum

Introduction

Acne vulgaris is clinically characterised by papules, pustules, seborrhea, comedones, nodules and scarring in some cases^[5]. It may manifest its symptoms under the influence of hormonal imbalances. It may be of genetic origin or follicular hyper keratinization or due to microbial colonization^[11]. Acne causes cosmetic issues which leads to depression and it hampers quality of life of a patient. Homoeopathic medicines have been effective as a standalone treatment in acne vulgaris and in improving the quality of life of the patients^[12]. Arsenicum bromatum has affinity towards skin affections and mentioned in its clinical utility as useful for “young people with violent papules on the nose”^[14]. It is useful in cases of acne rosacea^[4].

This study aims to explore the lesser-known homoeopathic medicine Arsenicum bromatum in the management of acne vulgaris and improving the quality of life in young females.

Clinical features

In the early stage of acne, there is redness with development of a papule, which are bright red, irregular in shape and tender on touch, at this stage these are called as acne papulosa, some papules involute while some suppurate to form pustules, called as acne pustulosa. In some cases, it turns into a cyst called ‘acne cystica’ which tends to persist discharging thin purulent fluid. Scar formation with pits is common sequel of acne which can be very disabling and disfiguring^[1]. ‘Acne fulminans’ is rare and severe form of acne. Another type of acne called ‘acne excoriee’, seen in teenage girls undergoing psychological problems. Comedone is the primary lesion of the acne, signifies a dark, horny follicular plug composed of dried sebum called as white heads. Over the passage of time the Sulphur content of the sebum is converted to sulphide turning it into a black head.

Diagnosis

Global acne grading system→ the intensity of acne can be graded using validated GAGS. This system divides face, chest and back into 6 areas and assigns an area factor of 1, 2 or 3. Forehead- 2, right check- 2, and left check- 2, nose and chin-1, chest and upper back-3). Each type of lesion is given a value from 0-4 (lesion =0, comedones =1, papules=2, pustules=3 and nodules=4). Acne score / local score is the product of the most severe lesion in that area multiplied by the area factor. A global score of 1 to 18 is consider mild, 19 to 30 moderate, 31 to 38 severe & 39 very severe.

Homoeopathic management

Previous studies conducted on efficacy of homoeopathic medicines on acne concluded that Homeopathic medicines may be useful as stand-alone treatment of patients with severe acne vulgaris.

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Remedies like Lycopodium, Palladium, Platinum, Natrum Mur, Sulphur, Silicea, Calc Sulph, Kali Brom and Hepar Sulph have proven to be effective in the management of acne vulgaris. Certain remedies like Antimonium Crudum, Calcarea Carb, Graphites, Lycopodium, Natrum Muriaticum, Sepia can be used as constitutional medicines to prevent recurrences. Belladonna, Hepar Sulph, Merc Sol, and Silicea can be used in pustular form of acne.

Arsenicum bromatum and Acne: Arsenicum bromatum (Bromide of Arsenic) 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.

Material and Methods

Source of data: The subjects will be selected from OPD, IPD and peripheral centers of MNR Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital, Sangareddy.

Sample size: 20

Materials: Homoeopathic dilutions from MNRHMC pharmacy, globules, 1 dram bottles

Inclusion criteria: Females aged 12-25 years.

Exclusion criteria

Patients above 25 years. Suffering from other chronic illness or systemic illness and on homoeopathic treatment for other health issues.

Method of collection of data

A sample of minimum 20 cases will be selected based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. It will be ensured that patients are made aware of the study in their own language and an informed consent will be taken from every individual. The symptom totality is taken from every individual and Arsenicum Bromatum remedy is prescribed.

Observation and Results

Table 1: Distribution of cases according to age

S. No	Age	Cases	%
1	18	2	10%
2	19	4	20%
3	20	5	25%
4	21	3	15%
5	22	2	10%
6	23	1	5%
7	24	2	10%
8	25	1	5%

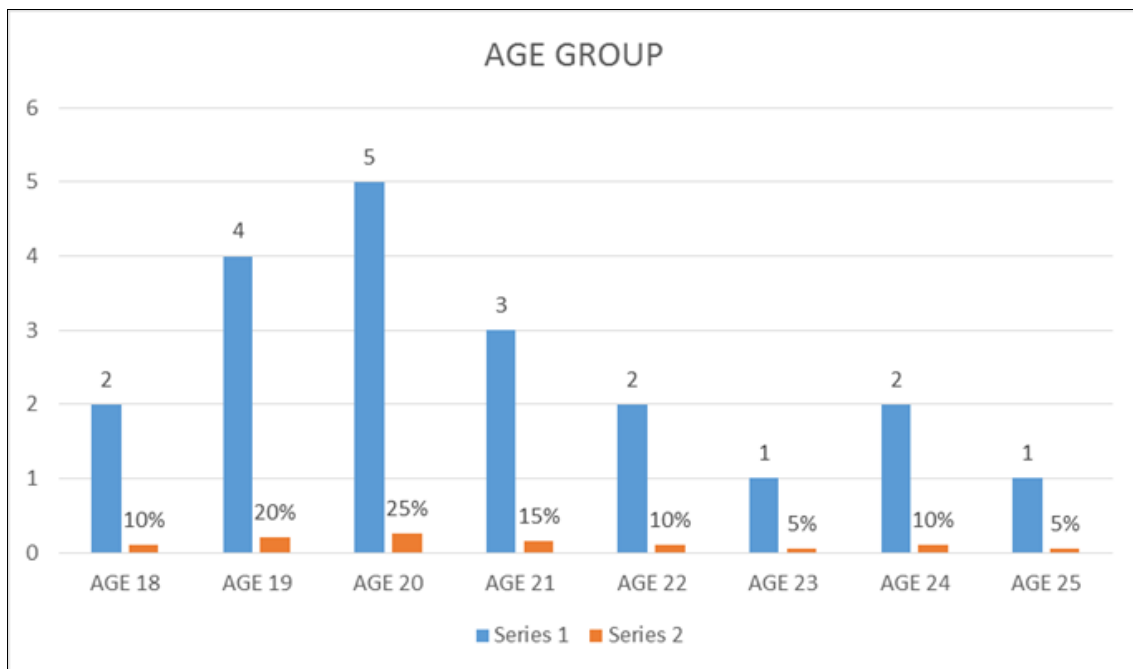


Chart 1: Age group

Table 2: Gag Score

S.no	Before Treatment	After Treatment	Remark
1	27	0	Markedly improved
2	18	6	Slightly improved
3	21	9	Slightly improved
4	15	0	Markedly improved
5	18	0	Markedly improved
6	21	9	Slightly improved
7	14	Dropped out	Dropped out
8	21	0	Markedly improved
9	14	14	Not improved
10	21	9	Slightly improved
11	14	0	Markedly improved
12	14	8	Slightly improved

13	18	8	Slightly improved
14	8	8	Not improved
15	12	12	Not improved
16	21	0	Markedly improved
17	21	21	Not improved
18	21	0	Markedly improved
19	12	12	Not improved
20	14	14	Not improved

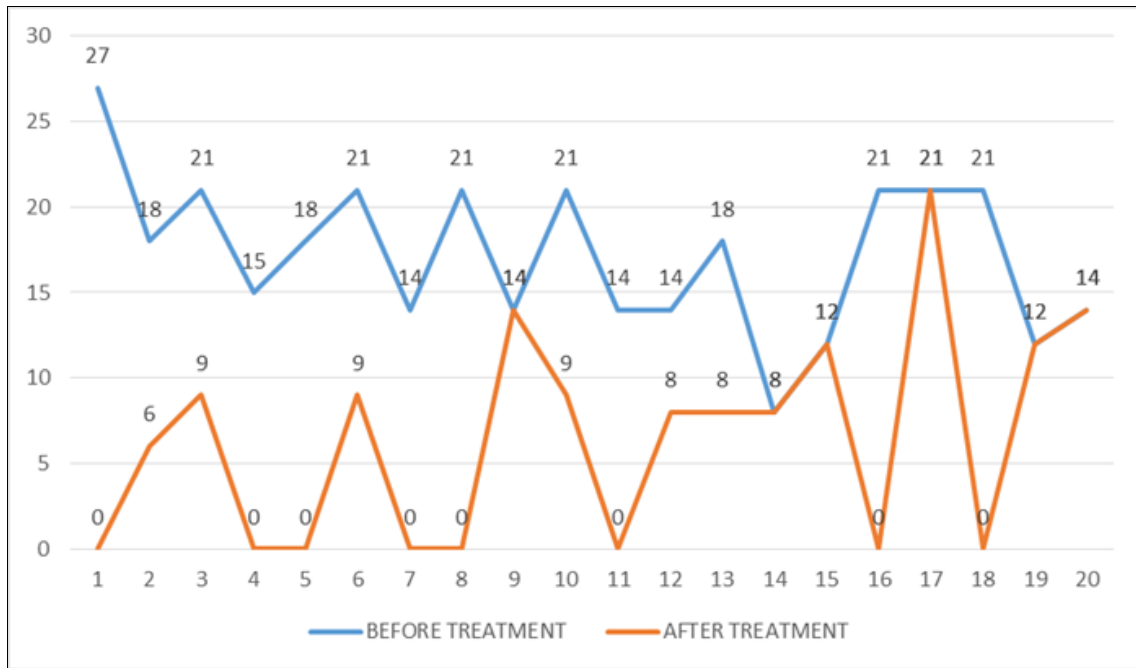


Chart 2: Gag Score

Table 3: Distribution of cases according to remarks

S. No	Remarks	Cases	%
1	Markedly improved	7	35%
2	Slightly improved	6	30%
3	Not improved	6	30%
4	Dropped out	1	5%

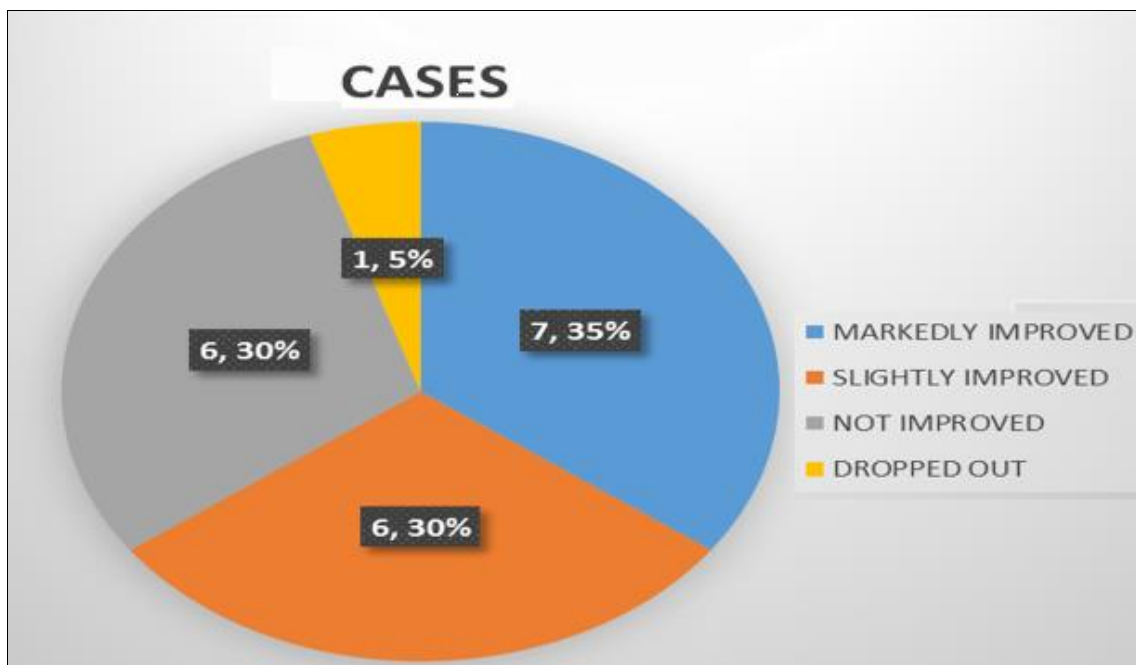


Chart 3: Distribution of cases according to remarks

Discussion

The subjects of the study were selected from the patients with Acne vulgaris who attended the OPD, IPD, Camps and peripheral health centers of MNR Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital, as per the inclusion criteria. A total of 20 cases were recorded and the medicine was prescribed. Improvement is noted based on Global Acne Grading System (GAGS).

Based on the analysis of 20 cases, following observations are made.

Age (table 1)

Out of 20 cases studied, 25% cases are of the age 20, 20% cases are of age 19, 15% of cases are of age 21, 10% cases are of ages 18, 22, 24 and 5% cases are of ages 23 and 25. Maximum prevalence was noted in the age of 20 i.e.; 25%.

Sex

Out of 20 cases studied, 20 patients were females i.e., 100% are females. So, females are highly prone to Acne vulgaris according to the study.

Scoring according to gag scale (table 2)

For assessing the efficacy of Arsenicum bromatum in treating acne vulgaris GAGS score was used. In which score (0) is considered as clear, (1-18) is considered as mild, (19-30) is moderate and (31-38) is severe. In all the twenty cases studied it was observed that, there was marked improvement in 7 cases after the treatment based on the gags score (before and after). The Case no. 1, 4, 5, 8, 11, 16, 18 is having marked improvement.

Remarks (table 3)

Out of 20 cases, 35% of cases had marked improvement, 30% of cases had slight improvement, 30% of cases has not improved and 5% cases dropped out.

Limitations

Number of samples used in this study is very small. Only the single remedy is selected for the study.

Conclusion

This study helps to understand the role of Arsenicum bromatum in treating Acne vulgaris. This study led to conclude that females are highly prone in Acne vulgaris. From this study of 20 cases, 35% of cases only had marked improvement, so, this shows that Arsenicum bromatum prescribed on the basis of the presence of acne per se is less effective in the treatment of Acne vulgaris. So, prescribing one remedy or a complex on the basis of a superficial physical symptom only does not seem to be as effective as the traditional Homoeopathic method of prescribing, i.e., one remedy based on a complete case analysis.

Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

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