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**Dr. Sushikshitha SA**

MD Student, Department of  
Organon of Medicine, Father  
Muller Homoeopathic Medical  
College, Mangalore,  
Karnataka, India

## A review of prophylactic measures against epidemic diseases based on Hahnemannian literature and modern evidence

**Dr. Sushikshitha SA**

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### Abstract

The efforts of the homoeopathic system of medicine in the recent pandemic are known to all and had a major role to play in the prevention and control of COVID-19. However, guidelines for the prevention and cure of such epidemic diseases are not a new concept for homeopathic physicians. This article is regarding a review on the prevention of epidemic diseases based on lesser writings of Hahnemann and the Organon of Medicine and its deep-seated relationship with the recent protocols and prevention in COVID-19.

**Keywords:** Epidemic disease, COVID-19, hahnemann's lesser writing, organon of medicine, genus epidemicus

### Introduction

The greatest threat to human civilization is epidemics. Epidemic disease is defined as the widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time. In aphorism 73, Hahnemann gives the definition of epidemic diseases as "Diseases in which many persons are attacked with very similar sufferings from the same cause (epidemically); these diseases generally become infectious (contagious) when they prevail among thickly congregated masses of human beings." [1]. Controlling these epidemic outbreaks, which are diseases that spread quickly and extensively and impact a large number of people in a population at the same time, is one of the most significant difficulties in public health. Homoeopathy has been used to treat epidemic diseases since the time of Hahnemann, who suggested Belladonna for scarlet fever. The most recent epidemic that turned into a pandemic was COVID-19. Homeopathic literature has already mentioned guidelines to prevent the spread of such an epidemic in its literature named "The Lesser Writings of Hahnemann" in the chapter "Friend of Health," written by Master Samuel Hahnemann in the year 1792, which holds true even today.

### Guideline for epidemic diseases according to the Lesser writing of Hahnemann [2]

He has discussed many methods of preventing the illness from spreading, with recommendations for the general public and people caring for sick persons affected by such diseases, in the chapter "Friend of Health," which is enclosed under the name "Protection against infection in epidemic disease."

He provides preventative measures for illnesses for which there are no recognised treatments. And by listing a few,

### Guidelines to the patient

1. The patient, if not too weak, may change his room and his bed every day, and the room he is to occupy may, before he comes into it in the morning, be well aired (ventilated) by opening the doors and all the windows.
2. The windows should be kept open so there is enough circulation of fresh air before the physician or the caretaker comes to visit him.

The author mentions about closed rooms being a source of infection when not ventilated adequately.

**Corresponding Author:**

**Dr. Sushikshitha SA**

MD Student, Department of  
Organon of Medicine, Father  
Muller Homoeopathic Medical  
College, Mangalore,  
Karnataka, India

**Guidelines to the physician**

1. Advises the physician to stay for a short period of time as possible and maintain a reasonable distance from the bed of the patient.
2. It is seen that the room of the patient is thoroughly aired (ventilated).
3. Maintain hygiene and take enough precautions when examining the sick.
4. Maintain good health in terms of mind (avoid over excretion, worry, grief) and body.
5. If the physician himself experiences the symptoms of the disease, he advises the physician to immediately stop visiting the patient or attending any other duty.
6. Change the clothes worn when attending the patient, before visiting other patients, and the former clothes worn should be hung up in a well-ventilated place and refrain any one from going near them.
7. During examination of the patient, to avoid the risk of exposure from droplet infection, the physician needs to maintain enough distance.

He warns against enclosed spaces being the hub of infection and even articles of clothing being the source of infection. He even advises physicians to maintain good health through diet and personal hygiene as a means of precaution against the prevailing epidemic.

**WHO Guidelines for COVID-19** <sup>[3,4]</sup>

1. Perform hand hygiene.
2. Assess the risk of exposure to body substances or contaminated surfaces before any health-care activity.
3. Education of health workers, patients and visitors.
4. Covering mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
5. Hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions.
6. Spatial separation of persons with acute febrile respiratory symptoms.
7. Wear (1) a surgical or procedure mask and eye protection (eye visor, goggles) or (2) a face shield to protect mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, and mouth during activities that are likely to generate splashes or sprays of blood, body fluids, secretions, and excretions.
8. Prevent skin and mucous membrane exposures and contamination of clothing.
9. Place acute febrile respiratory symptomatic patients at least 1 metre (3 feet) away from others in common waiting areas, if possible.

The guidelines written by doctor Hahnemann were when medicine and medical procedures were just budding, but we see that it holds true even up till today and has close to precautions followed in recent times.

**Prevention of epidemic disease through medication**

The collective symptoms of a sizeable population suffering from the same illness or epidemic are collected and a remedy corresponding to these symptoms is referred to as "Genus epidemicus" <sup>[5]</sup>. Genus epidemicus was a topic covered by Dr. Hahnemann in Aphorisms 101-102 of the Organon, 6th edition, and the phrase was first used in Aphorism 241 <sup>[5]</sup>. In the sixth edition of the Organon of Medicine, he explains how to manage epidemic diseases with homeopathic treatment, making it very clear that each of them is different from the previous one, even if it is the

same pathogen <sup>[6]</sup>. The homoeopathic doctor can choose one or more similar homoeopathic medicines that are suitable for treating the majority of people suffering from that epidemic disease by carefully observing a certain number of cases and analysing the "genus epidemicus," an image of the set of symptoms that all patients present <sup>[7]</sup>. Anecdotal evidence suggests that homoeopathy was effective during the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918 to 1919, which resulted in at least 20 million deaths globally and more than 500,000 in the United States alone. Julian Winston, a historian, claims that compared to patients treated by conventional doctors, homoeopathic patients' mortality rates ranged from 1 to 2 percent to 30 to 60 percent <sup>[8]</sup>.

In the recent pandemic it was seen that homeopathic remedies administered as a preventative means to prevent COVID-19 was effective and useful <sup>[9]</sup>. A study on this has given wonderful result on the effectiveness of homeopathic remedies as a mean of remedies Against COVID-19 <sup>[10]</sup>.

It is seen that homeopathic medicines used as prophylactics has seen a positive response in different studies on a wide variety of diseases. Better personal & surrounding hygiene and proper diet & avoidance of overcrowding combined with the genus epidemicus helps to achieve the goal of cure.

**Conclusion**

It is clear from a review of human health and history that sickness and epidemics in general will persist. Homoeopathy provides a process for discovering the suitable treatment or remedies for an epidemic or pandemic that is well-structured, and this method should be properly applied, put into practise, and documented for the benefit of a broader community.

The moment has come for an integrated strategy where various therapies contribute their best work for the benefit of patients and collaborate on the same platform for the improvement of humanity.

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Department of Organon of Medicine  
Father Muller Homoeopathic Medical College

**Conflict of Interest**

Not available

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