

## COMPLEMENTARY & ALTERNATIVE THERAPY IN DENTISTRY: "HOMEOPATHY"- A Review

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**ABSTRACT:** Homeopathy is a system of medicine that is based on the principle of 'like cures like', which has been used for over 200 years. The inclusion of homeopathic medicine in a dentist's therapeutic armory is particularly useful for a range of treatments, from relatively mild acute conditions to complex chronic pathologies. The present article provides an introduction to relevance of homeopathy in dentistry, finishing with short mention of its education in dental curriculum.

**KEYWORDS:** Homeopathy, Dentistry, Therapeutics

### INTRODUCTION

Homeopathy is a system of alternative medicine originated in 1796 by *Samuel Hahnemann*, based on his doctrine of *similia similibus curentur* ("like cures like"), according to which a substance that causes the symptoms of a disease in healthy people will cure similar symptoms in sick people.<sup>1</sup>

#### Origin and Philosophy

*Hahnemann* believed that the underlying causes of disease were phenomena that he termed *miasms*, and that homeopathic remedies addressed these. The remedies are prepared by repeatedly diluting a chosen substance in alcohol or distilled water, followed by forceful striking on an elastic body, called *succussion*.<sup>1,2</sup> Each dilution followed by succussion is said to increase the *remedy's potency*. Dilution usually continues well past the point where none of the original substance remains. Homeopaths select remedies by consulting reference books known as *repertories*, considering the totality of the patient's symptoms as well as the patient's personal traits, physical and psychological state, and life history.<sup>2</sup>

Conventional therapy believes that symptoms of an illness are a direct result of that illness and tries to suppress them with the medicine whereas homeopathy sees symptoms as the body's attempt to overcome the illness and seeks to support this process with the remedy, and not to suppress it.<sup>2</sup>

Homeopathic remedies are based on a holistic approach to health that addresses illness by stimulating the body's own healing powers. The idea behind homeopathic medicine is similar to that of getting a vaccination. The compound selection is based on the symptoms a patient is exhibiting.

Homeopathic prescriptions are of two types mainly

- a. *Pathological homeopathic* prescribing is a treatment specifically for the disease or ailment;
- b. *Constitutional homeopathic* prescribing involves analyzing a person's body type, temperament, disposition, and behavioral tendencies.

Homeopathy in holistic dentistry offers a combination of these. Thus, it is possible to prescribe one remedy to suit the general temperament or psychological state of a patient and another for the particular problem the patient is experiencing.<sup>1,2</sup>

Homeopathy is a complimentary therapy as conventional treatment is still often required; however there are occasions when there is no conventional treatment and others when conventional treatment has unpleasant side effects. These are the times when homeopathy really comes into its own and then it becomes an alternate therapy.

### Uses within Dentistry

Homeopathy has a broad range of uses and there are some areas in particular where the results from its use can be spectacular. In the area of dentistry and oral health in general, the judicious use of the appropriate homeopathic medicine can provide rapid relief from a number of conditions for which there is little that conventional medicine can offer, or where the cure may at times be worse than the disease.<sup>3</sup>

Homeopathy does not replace the normal mechanics of dentistry, but it does make the whole procedure much more relaxed and pleasant for both the patient and the dentist. Oral hygiene and diet are still of the utmost importance. Even here, homeopathy can help. Regular use of a *Calendula* mouthwash helps to keep gums healthy. Several homeopathic pharmacies produce excellent mouthwashes containing a mixture of healing remedies, which will help to keep the mouth healthy if used on a regular daily basis. *Weleda* make an excellent one called Medicinal Gargle, which contains twelve different herbs and homeopathic remedies. *Propolis* mouthwash is also excellent.<sup>4</sup>

Following are some of the more common conditions and some solutions that have been found in routine practice to alleviate them. Unless specified, the medicines mentioned should not be repeated any more than 3 times without the advice of a competent and qualified practitioner.<sup>5,6,7,8,9,10,11</sup>

1. **Tooth ache:** *Chamomilla* 200C, one hour prior to surgery, and repeated every 15 minutes as necessary for no more than 6 doses.
2. **Delayed Eruption of teeth:** Use *Calc carb* 30C, twice a week.
3. **Apprehension/Anxiety (about dental surgery):**
  - i. Trepidation with lethargy – use *Gelsemium* 30C on the morning and evening prior to the procedure and then one hour prior.
  - ii. Trepidation with hyperactivity – use *Argnit* 30C on the morning and evening prior to the procedure and then one hour prior.
4. **To reduce Scar tissue formation after oral surgical procedures:** Use a mixture of *Thiosinaminum* 6C, *Silica* 6C, *Arnica* 6C, *Anagalis* 6C and *Benzoic acid* 6C, three times daily for 5 days after surgery.
5. **Dry socket:** With throbbing pain use *Belladonna* 30C every hour. With unbearable pain, use *Coffea* 30C, every 15 minutes. To promote healing use *Hepar sulph* 6C every 4 hours.
6. **Abrasions:** From instrumentation or manipulation-apply *Hypericum* and *Calendula* tinctures to the area 3 times daily.
7. **Bleeding following oral surgical procedures:** Initially, *Arnica* 200C every 15 minutes. For persistent bleeding of bright red blood use *Phosphorus* 30C every 15 minutes. For persistent bleeding of dark blood use *Lachesis* 30C every hour.
8. **Trauma:** Injuries resulting in bruising or fractures- use *Arnica* 30C three times daily for chronic problems, or every hour for acute injury for up to 6 doses. Injuries resulting in nerve damage should be treated with *Hypericum* 30C every hour for acute injury. Injuries resulting from puncture wounds, such as injections, use *Ledum* 30C every hour. Injuries resulting from incisional wounds, use *Staphysagria* 15C every hour. For tired sore jaws following prolonged surgical procedures that are improved by warmth, use *Mag phos* 30C every hour. For tired sore jaws following surgical procedures that are not improved by warmth, use *Arnica* 30C every hour.
9. **Dental Abscesses:** Initially, with throbbing, and mild, *Belladonna* 30C, every 30 mins. With halitosis and excessive salivation use *Merc sol* 6C every hour. With obvious pus, to hasten its expulsion, use *Hepar sulph* 6C every 2 hours. Where the abscess is swollen and accompanied by numbness in the area, use *Myristica* 6X every hour. Once pus has started to drain, to hasten its removal use *Silica* 6C twice daily.
10. **Apthous ulcers:** In nervous patients use *Borax* 30C every 4 hours. Where they occur with foul breath and the tongue is large and retains the imprints of the teeth, use *Merc sol* 30C every 4 hours. Ulcers with yellow or yellow-green bases, with a swollen uvula, use *Kali bich* 30C every 4 hours. Ulcers with bleeding bases, use *Nit ac* 30C every 4 hours.
11. **Other Ulcerations:**
  - i. *Natrum muriaticum*- Use for cold sores and fever blisters. Lips and corners of mouth dry and cracked lips.
  - ii. *Nitricum acidum*- Use for ulcers with irregular edges and a raw appearance with a tendency to bleed easily.
12. **Oral Candidiasis:** *Borax* 30C three times daily.
13. **Oral Lichen planus:** *Borax* 4x twice daily when blisters mostly appear in mouth. *Sulphur* 30 twice daily for 15 days.
14. **Hypersalivation:** *Baryta carbonica* - Use when there is excessive saliva during sleep.

Phosphorus - Use for hypersalivation and when gums are swollen and bleed easily.

15. **Xerostomia:** *Bryonia alba* - Use for an extremely dry mouth, with dryness of mucous membranes and great thirst.  
*Pulsatilla* - Use for diminished saliva with no thirst.
16. **Bruxism:** While sleeping, use *Cina* 30C, one hour before sleep. While awake, use *Nux vomica* 30C twice daily.
17. **Gingivitis:** With heavily coated tongue, use *Merc sol* 30C three times daily. With clean tongue, use *Nit ac* 30C three times daily. With excessive destruction of tissue, use *Kali chlor* 30C three times daily.
18. **Sore gums following scaling:** Use *Arnica* 30C every 2 hours.
19. **Halitosis:** Use a mixture of *Carbo veg* 30C and *Merc sol* 30C twice daily.
20. **Periodontitis :**With bleeding gums, foul breath and a large tongue the retains the imprint of the teeth use *Merc sol* 6C once daily. For bleeding gums with substantial loss of periodontal bone, use *Phosphorus* 15C once daily.
21. **TMJ Dysfunctions:**
  - i. *Arum triphyllum* - Use for pain in joint on swallowing.
  - ii. *Calcarea flourica* - Use for hypermobile joints
  - iii. *Calcarea phosphorica* - Use when mouth cannot be opened without pain.
  - iv. *Carbo vegetabilis* - Use for vertigo with nausea and tinnitus.
  - v. *Chamomilla* - Use for low pain threshold. Unbearable spasms of pain radiating into the ear.
  - vi. *Cuprum metallicum* - Use for trismus of muscles.
  - vii. *Granatum* - Use for painful cracking of the joint.
  - viii. *Magnesium phosphorica* - Use for muscle spasms.
  - ix. *Phytolacca decanda* - Use for earaches with pain extending into teeth, jaw, and throat.
  - x. *Rhus toxicodendron* - Use for joint stiffness that improves with movement and for popping of TMJ.
22. **Oral Cancer:** The treatment of Cancer can be quite successful with Homeopathy, often in conjunction with allopathic medicine in advanced cases. In early stages, particularly with breast cancer, brain tumor, uterine cancer, prostate cancer, leukemia, thyroid cancer, liver cancer & kidney cancer the success rate is close to 40% with appropriate compliance by the patient. Some of the remedies used for cancer of tongue include *Apis Mel*, *Aurum Mur*, *Arsenicum*, *Carbo Animalis*, *Condurango*, *Conium Mac*, *Crotalus Horridus*, *Galium Aparine*,

*Hydrastis Can*, *Kali Cyanatum*, *Kali Chloricum*, *Lachesis*, *Merc Sol*, *Muriatic Acid*, *Nitric Acidum*, *Phosphorus*, *Sempervivum Tectorum*, *Sepia*, *Silicea*, *Thuja*. Potencies used- 6C, 30C, 200C and 1M. Post Surgical Remedies include *Calendula Off*, *Hypericum Perf*, *Staphysgaria*. List of remedies used for various complications following oral cancer treatment are tabulated. (Table I).

#### Dosage Guidelines for Remedies 200 X and under:<sup>6</sup>

##### Choice of Potency

When the treatment is prescribed on the basis of local signs and symptoms, prescribe low potencies i.e. under 12X.

When the treatment is prescribed on the basis of a mixture of local, general, mental and emotional signs and symptoms, prescribe higher potencies i.e. 30X - 200X.

##### Number of times remedies should be taken:

- I. *Low potency remedies (under 12X)*
  - first aid every 5-30 minutes
  - acute conditions every 30 minutes to hourly, decreasing to 3-4 times a day
- II. *Medium potency remedies (12X - 30X)*
  - one to three times a day
- III. *High potency remedies (30X - 200X)*
  - once a day.

##### Reduce frequency with improvement

The lower the potency, the shorter its duration of action (for acute conditions) & higher the potency, the longer its duration of action (for chronic conditions). As opposed to pathologic or specific symptom prescribing, constitutional prescribing does not treat the disease entity, but rather the symptom complex of the individual who has the disease. The purpose of constitutional prescribing is not to seek to change a patient's character, but by modifying its tone that balances it, thereby giving systematic, systemic support to the self-healing effort of the organism. By encompassing the sum total of the individual's physical, emotional, and mental picture constitutional analysis and prescribing performs psychotherapy while also working on the physical level.

#### CONCLUSION

The British Homeopathic Dental Association is a membership organization for dentists who have trained in homeopathy and endorses postgraduate training and education in homeopathic medicine. Likewise in India too budding dentists should be taught and examined on how to combine homeopathy responsibly within their individual professional setting.

So through the present article I sincerely appeal to the Dental Council of India (DCI) that dental schools should expand subjects like "Dental Homeopathy" in curriculum for BDS students & thereafter be formulating as separate postgraduate discipline in dentistry.

Table I. Remedies used for various complications following oral cancer treatment

S.No.	COMPLICATION	HOMEOPATHIC DRUGS
1.	<b>Xerostomia(Dryness of mouth)</b>	1. Belladonna 2. Bryonia Alb 3. Nux Moschata 4. Muriatic acid 5. Sulphur
2.	<b>Fibrosis(Scar formation)</b>	1. Calc fluor 2. Thiosinaminum 3. Silicea
3.	<b>Burns(Mucositis)</b>	1. Radium Brom 2. X ray
4.	<b>Hardness (Induration)</b>	1. X ray 2. Calc fluor
5.	<b>Chemotherapeutic complications</b>	1. Arsenicum Album 2. Cadmium Sulph 3. Ipecac 4. Kreosotum 5. Phosphorus
6.	<b>Oral cancer metastasizing to neck</b>	1. Baryta lod 2. Calcareo fluor 3. Carbo animalis 4. Cistus Can 5. Conium mac 6. Hydrastis can 7. Iodium 8. Lapis alba 9. Mercurius 10. Merc Iodatam 11. Phytolacca dec 12. Scrophularia Nod
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potencies used are D6, 6C, 30C, 200C and 1M</li> </ul>		

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