



CAN HOMOEOPATHY COMBAT COVID-19? A REPERTORIAL VIEW.

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ABSTRACT

Corona virus disease 2019, COVID-19, the ongoing pandemic had resulted in greater loss and had been challenging to the global health security and Health care system. With no curative medicines, repurposing of existing allopathic medicines was widely carried out. Besides Allopathy, traditional medicines and complimentary alternative system of medicines are also being tried and tested everywhere. Management of COVID-19 patients in India is being done according to the guidelines of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). Under its directives, the Ministry of AYUSH has recommended using Homeopathy drugs as Prophylactic medicines in the name of Immune boosters and also as a Therapeutic agent along with the existing standard of care in the Management of COVID-19 disease. During many previous epidemics Homeopathic medical system has registered its success in both treatment and preventive aspects, which has been recorded in various literatures. Adapting the principles of individualization in an epidemic situation, two major concepts - **Genus epidemicus** and **Similimum through Repertorisation** have proved to be viable in embracing homeopathic approach for Prophylactic and Therapeutic measures against COVID-19 respectively. We in this study have used Repertorisation to derive similar remedies for the clinical picture in each concept, to combat COVID-19. The results from the review and repertory have shown **Arsenicum album** and **Phosphorus** to have the most similarity with COVID-19 clinical picture of various stages as listed in the World health organisation (WHO) and Indian council of Medical Research (ICMR), based on the two concepts respectively. These remedies prove to have significant effect as a prophylactic and therapeutic against the COVID-19 disease based on the Genus epidemicus concept, yet it needs scientific clinical trials for stronger and conclusive evidence which have been started and is being done by various homoeopathic hospitals across India.

KEYWORDS : COVID-19, Repertory, Genus Epidemicus, Homeopathy, Alternative Medicines, AYUSH

INTRODUCTION

SARS CoV-2 started as an endemic outbreak in China, in 2019 with wide transnational spread, resulting in an unprecedented pandemic "Corona Virus Disease 2019 [COVID-19]". With vaccines under trial and a mission standardizing treatment for the management of COVID-19, a large number of allopathic medicines are being tried. Besides repurposing the existing allopathic medicines, nations like China have successfully tried and used their native traditional medicines in treating COVID-19[1]. This being taken as a lead way for our country, the Government of India has started its quest for both prophylactic and therapeutic trials using medicines from our traditional medicine systems like *Siddha*, *Ayurveda*, *Unani*, *Yoga and Naturopathy*, and *Homoeopathy* collectively under the Ministry of AYUSH system of medicine, to effectively combat the disease[2].

Homeopathic system of medicine though originated in Germany, is being practiced worldwide and is a time tested two-century-old empirical system of healing, aimed at curbing a disease naturally, holistically, gently and permanently - based on the principle, a natural law of healing, 'Similia Similibus Curentur', which means 'let likes be treated by likes'[3] The system is one of the well-recognized alternative systems of medicine under the Ministry of AYUSH, in India.

Management of COVID-19 patients in India is being done according to the guidelines of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). Under its directives, the Ministry of AYUSH has recommended using Homeopathy drugs as Prophylactic medicines, Immune boosters, and also as a Therapeutic agent along with the Existing Standard of Care in the Management of COVID-19 disease.

According to WHO, CDC, and ICMR, the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 that may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus are classified into different stages namely mild-moderate, severe and critical[4].

Mild-Moderate Stage

- Fever
- Dyspnoea
- Gastrointestinal troubles like Nausea, Vomiting
- Nasal congestion
- Sore throat
- Loss of smell
- Mild gasping for breath with Pneumonia

Severe Stage

- High Fever
- Cough with gasping for breath
- Severe respiratory distress [$SpO_2 < 90\%$ on room air]

- Bloody expectoration
- Delirium
- Children with clinical signs of Pneumonia and Central Cyanosis.

Critical Stage

- Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome
- Pulmonary Oedema
- Fluid overload leading to Cardiac Failure
- Sepsis with weak pulse, cold extremities.
- Reduced urinary output
- Thrombocytopenia, Hyperbilirubinemia
- Septic shock with Hypothermia and Collapse

While most people with COVID-19 develop only mild (40%) or moderate (40%) disease approximately 15% develop the severe stage that requires oxygen support, and 5% have the critical disease with complications such as respiratory failure, acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS), sepsis and septic shock, thromboembolism, and/or multiorgan failure including acute kidney disease and cardiac failure.

Thus, every system of medicine suggested prophylactic medicines focussed to improve the general immunity of people against the disease and to combat from the mild/moderate clinical manifestations of COVID-19.

Homeopathy And Outbreaks

The principle of the Homeopathic system revolves around the concept of 'Laws of Similars', which states that the substance that triggers disease also be used to treat the disease and shaking and diluting the substance that causes the disease can be used to increase its potency – a process referred to as dynamisation or potentization. It advocates tailor-made-single remedy prescription based on the principle of individualization that includes several factors like the physical, emotional and mental symptoms along with the chief complaint presented. Owing to the unique approach and possibility to provide early treatment based on the semiology of the patient in any diseased condition, it helps to keep track of the disease progression[5].

Homeopathy has always been considered to be a bane in many epidemic situations since antiquity. The first use of Homeopathic medicines during an epidemic date back to the Hahnemann period, where he first used Belladonna to treat Scarlet Fever. Thus, during an outbreak, where the majority of the patients infected by the same infection exhibit the same signs and symptoms, besides the core principle of personalizing homeopathy- Individualisation, Combination remedies and Genus epidemicus are used. However, these concepts rely on the selection of similimum from the totality of picture through the concept of Repertorisation and *Materia Medica*.

Concept of Repertorisation

A "repertory" is a document consisting of the list of symptoms and those signs that have been found to be the causation, location, and sensation of each symptom and medicines that are similar to them. After reviewing a sick person's various signs and symptoms through clinical case taking, the totality of picture is converted to rubrics – the repertorial language and checked with repertory for similimum. This would reveal few medicines and they will then be studied in detail using *Materia Medica* for the prescription. A Repertory and *Materia Medica*, thus, in short, are complementary to each other[6,7].

There are various repertories named after the Homeopathic practitioners and Stalwarts who authored them and they include **Kent repertory**, **Boger Boenninghausen's Characteristics & Repertory**, **Murphy Repertory**, and other Repertories like **Complete Repertory**, **Universal Repertory**

and **Synthesis Repertory**. With the advancing scientific world in terms of technology, Repertorial software has been developed for accurate conversion of rubrics and selection of similimum and they include book repertories that are upgraded to software like **Synthesis repertory** and other software like **Hompath** and **Vithoullkas Compass** which comprises of all major repertories used in Homeopathic medical system around the world. The totality picture of any disease or clinical picture will be checked for similimum through repertorisation and this method will reveal certain remedies that can be zeroed in for a final prescription.

During any epidemic or pandemic, the successful past track records of the Homeopathic medical system, besides adapting the principles of individualization, has been attributed to the two major concepts that are viable to embrace homeopathic principle for Prophylactic and Therapeutic measures against COVID-19. They include **Genus Epidemicus** and **Similimum through Repertorisation** respectively and we in this study are thus going to derive similar remedies for the clinical picture in each concept, to combat COVID-19, through Repertorisation.

This article is a scientific review on the principles of homeopathy, its management during disease outbreaks, and use of repertory in ascertaining the most suitable remedial measure. This will be helpful to use them as a curative agent or as an additive along with the existing standard of care, in the management of infectious outbreaks like COVID-19 and the hurdles in executing the homeopathic principles into practice for patient care.

OBJECTIVE

To review and analyse the role of the homeopathic medical system in combatting COVID-19.

SUBJECT AND METHODS

Articles focusing on the concept and principles of the Homeopathic medical system from various research databases like PubMed, Web of Science, and Embase were reviewed. The most common clinical picture of COVID-19 was derived and totality was framed for Repertorisation. Repertorisation software based on Complete Repertory 2005 [8], Universal Repertory, Boger Boenninghausen's Characteristics & Repertory and Synthesis Repertory version 9 [10] was used for analysing the similimum of homeopathic medicines based on the totality picture of COVID-19 (stage-wise).

RESULTS

Genus Epidemicus And COVID-19

The selection of homeopathic medicine to be used in prophylactic measures and therapeutic trials of COVID-19 was done as per the standard laid down by Dr. Hahnemann. The symptoms as reported from various physicians through published literature and clinical reports were recorded and cross verified with the symptoms enlisted by the World Health Organisation (WHO), United States Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The totality of picture was then framed and translated to Rubrics counts for repertorisation.

The repertorisation of the totality picture was conducted using Complete Repertory 2005, Universal Repertory, Boger Boenninghausen's Characteristics & Repertory (BBCR) and the Generic remedy was ascertained and derived.

The totality picture revealed 50 rubrics which when checked for similimum using BBCR Repertory (Figure 1) resulted in a number of similar set of medicines and among them, **Arsenicum album** was the most similar, covering 37 rubrics with 81 marks. The second and third closer similimum was

Pulsatilla with 36 rubrics (91 marks) and **Nux Vomica** with 35 rubrics (90 marks).

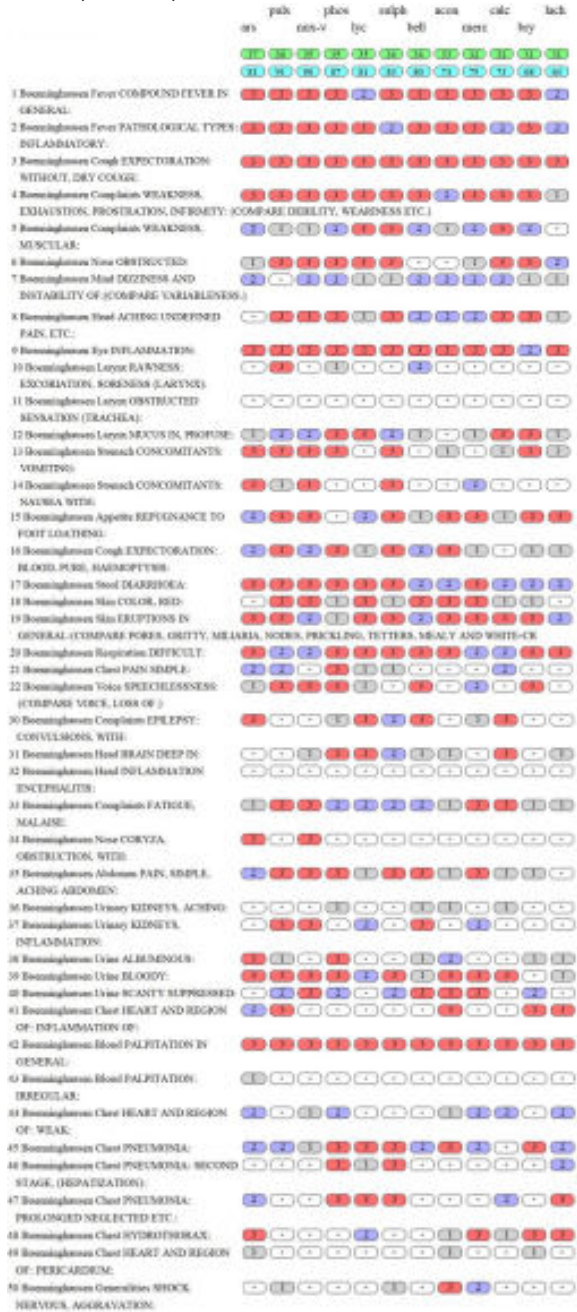


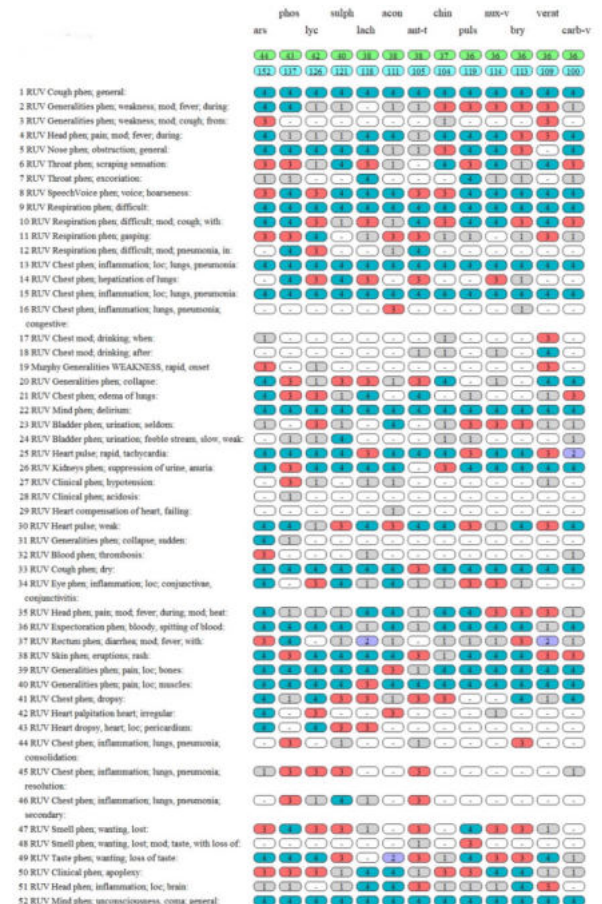
Figure 1: Repertorisation using BCCR – Prophylactic

Using Complete repertory (Figure 2), the symptoms that were suggestive of COVID-19 were collected and framed for totality by converting rubrics which of total 37 and when these rubrics were checked for similarity with Homeopathic medicines the **Arsenicum album** covered 32 rubrics (74 marks). The second and third closer Similimum that covered the clinical picture of COVID-19 was **Bryonia** with 32 rubrics (60 marks) and **Phosphorus** with 31 rubrics (68 marks).



Figure 2: Repertorisation using Complete Repertory – Prophylactic

The totality picture revealed 55 rubrics which when checked for similitum using Universal Repertory (Figure 3) resulted in a number of similar set of medicines and among them, **Arsenicum album** was the most similar, covering 44 rubrics with 152 marks. The second and third closer similitum was **Phosphorus** with 43 rubrics (137 marks) and **Lycopodium** with 42 rubrics (126 marks).



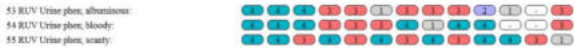


Figure 3: Repertorisation using Universal Repertory- Prophylactic

Thus, for the Prophylactic action against COVID-19, the most similimum remedy that can be prescribed as Genus Epidemicus derived using all the above three repertories was the **Arsenicum album**.

Similimum through Repertorisation:

Based on the stages of COVID-19 in its signs and symptoms, the concept of similimum when applied resulted in the list of top homeopathic remedies through Repertorisation. The mild and moderate stage of disease constituting the majority of the population was studied for its similarity with Homoeopathic

medicines and severe and critical stages were individually repertorised for their clinical picture. The analysis was detailed and based on the concept of similimum where every clinical picture was similar to a certain set of medicines and the total symptomatic picture comprised of 84 rubrics when using Synthesis Repertory. For the treatment of COVID-19, the 84 rubrics that formed the totality picture of its clinical manifestation were checked for similimum with Homeopathic medicines.

According to Repertorisation, the clinical picture of mild, moderate, severe, and critical stages of the disease demanded different remedies based on the differences in their clinical picture. For the Mild and Moderate stage of the disease (Figure 4) with symptoms like fever, gasping for breath, difficulty in respiration, diarrhoea, and loss of smell, **Phosphorus** and **Sulphur** were the similimum remedies that covered 20 of 53 rubrics.



Figure 4: Therapeutic Repertorisation for Mild and Moderate stage of COVID-19

The severe stage of COVID-19 with symptoms (Figure 5) like difficulty in respiration, gasping for breath, Cough with bloody expectoration, Fever, and Delirium, **Phosphorus** was the leading similimum covering 26 rubrics with 60 marks. The second highest similimum was the **Arsenicum album**, which covered 25 rubrics with 56 marks, all of which were chief complaints of the disease.



Figure 5: Therapeutic Repertorisation for Severe stage of COVID-19

The critical stage of illness with symptoms (Figure 6) like Irregular Palpitation of heart, Purpura, Weak Pulse, Haemorrhage, Dementia, and Heart Failure showed **Arsenicum album** as the highest similimum covering 31 rubrics with 63 marks. The second highest similimum was **Lachesis** with 30 rubrics (65 marks). Thus, the most similar remedies covering the highest number of rubrics in each stage of the disease includes **Phosphorus** and **Arsenicum album**.

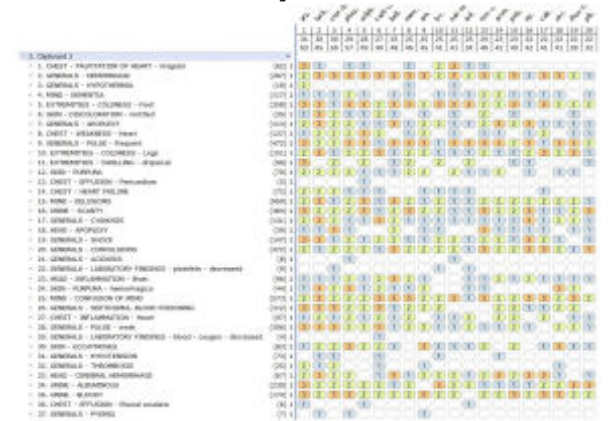


Figure 6: Therapeutic Repertorisation for Critical stage of COVID-19

CONCLUSION

As COVID-19 continues to pose a threat and tedious challenge not only in terms of prevention, but also in terms of treatment and patient care. The repertorisation of the totality picture for both genus epidemicus and therapeutic similimum were thus suggestive of remedies namely **Arsenicum album** for the former and **Phosphorus**, **Sulphur** and **Arsenicum album** for the latter. Of the therapeutic picture, mild and moderate totality seemed to be suggestive of **Phosphorus** and **Sulphur**, while the severe and critical picture suggested **Phosphorus** and **Arsenicum album**. The results thus obtained through Repertorisation may possibly serve as remedies effective in COVID-19 clinical management. However, we need advanced scientific clinical trials to further explore their action over patients in a clinical setup that could possibly revolutionise the therapeutic management of COVID-19.

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