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Homoeopathy

COVID 19; AT A GLANCE AND ROLE OF HOMOEOPATHY IN PAST EPIDEMICS AND ONGOING COVID 19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT This article shall throw light on the role of Homoeopathy in COVID-19 pandemic as well as success stories from past epidemics as far as the role of Homoeopathy is concerned. This article also covers the know how about COVID-19 viz cause, symptoms, preventive measures, treatment etc. A special section is about boosting immunity.

KEYWORDS : Covid-19, pandemic,Homoeopathy,Immunity

INTRODUCTION

"*Soap and water and common sense are best disinfectants*" - Sir William Osler (1849-1919) (Father of modern medicine)

Who would have imagined that the above dictum by Sir William Osler would become the need of the hour, in this ongoing COVID-19 pandemic?

People are either affected by the undue fear of this disease or are still harbouring many myths that need to be debunked.

Many sceptics who keep on attacking Homoeopathy (despite of the consistent evidence of the efficacy and scientific aspects of Homoeopathy) have opportunistically come up again to assault Homoeopathy.

On the other hand Homoeopathy (and also other alternative and complementary medicine) has received the support of firm believers. Among these firm believers are regular patients of Homoeopathy, celebrities, intellectuals etc. Even many physicians of conventional (modern) medicine have shown faith and hope in Homoeopathy regarding its role in this pandemic.

Before coming to the role of Homoeopathy, preventive as well as curative, in COVID-19, let us know what COVID-19 is.

- A pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan, China was first reported to the WHO Country Office in China on 31 December 2019
- The outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020.
- On 11 February 2020, WHO announced a name for the new coronavirus disease: COVID-19

INTRODUCTION TO COVID-19

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus.

SARS-CoV-2 is a type of RNA virus which is zoonotic in origin and it is estimated that Coronavirus infections are likely to emerge periodically in humans due to frequent cross-species infections and occasional spillover events. Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause the common cold as well as more serious respiratory illness. There are six known human coronaviruses which were first identified in the 1960s from patients with the common cold. The transmission of coronavirus is reported through respiratory droplets, human contact and faecal-oral route

Most people infected with the COVID-19 virus will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. Older people, and those with underlying medical problems like cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, and cancer are more likely to develop serious illness.(80% cases asymptomatic,15% cases with mild to moderate presentation,5%cases severe to critical presentation)

The best way to prevent and slow down transmission is be well informed about the COVID-19 virus, the disease it causes and how it spreads. Protect yourself and others from infection by washing your hands or using an alcohol based rub frequently and not touching your face.

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it's important that you also practice respiratory etiquette (for example, by coughing into a flexed elbow).

At this time, there are no specific vaccines or treatments for COVID-19. However, there are many ongoing clinical trials evaluating potential treatments. WHO will continue to provide updated information as soon as clinical findings become available.

SYMPTOMS

COVID-19 affects different people in different ways. Most infected people will develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalization.

Most common symptoms:

- ·Fever.
- ·Dry cough.
- ·Tiredness.

Less common symptoms:

- ·Aches and pains.
- ·Chills, sometimes with shaking
- ·Sore throat.
- ·Diarrhoea.
- ·Conjunctivitis.
- ·Headache.
- ·Loss of taste or smell.
- ·A rash on skin, or discolouration of fingers or toes.

Serious symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- Chest pain or pressure.
- Loss of speech or movement.

Seek immediate medical attention if you have serious symptoms. Always call before visiting your doctor or health facility.

People with mild symptoms who are otherwise healthy should manage their symptoms at home.

On average it takes 5–6 days from when someone is infected with the virus for symptoms to show, however it can take up to 14 days.

If you notice the following severe symptoms in yourself or a loved one, get medical help right away:

- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- Ongoing chest pain or pressure
- New confusion
- Can't wake up fully
- Bluish lips or face

According to researchers in China, these were the most common symptoms among people who had COVID-19:

- Fever 99%
- Fatigue 70%
- Cough 59%
- Lack of appetite 40%
- Body aches 35%
- Shortness of breath 31%
- Mucus/phlegm 27%

Some people who are hospitalized for COVID-19 also have dangerous blood clots, including in their legs, lungs, and arteries.

RISK FACTORS

Anyone can get COVID-19, and most infections are usually mild, especially in children and young adults. But if you aren't in an area where COVID-19 is spreading, haven't travelled from an area where it's spreading, and haven't been in contact with someone who has it, your risk of infection is low.

People over 65 are most likely to get a serious illness, as are those who live in nursing homes or long-term care facilities, who have weakened immune systems, or who have medical conditions including:

- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Lung disease
- Asthma
- Kidney disease that needs dialysis
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Cancer treatment, especially chemotherapy
- Liver disease
- Cigarette smoking

Some children and teens who are in the hospital with COVID-19 have an inflammatory condition that doctors are calling paediatric multisystem inflammatory syndrome (PMIS). Doctors think it may be linked to the virus. It causes symptoms similar to those of toxic shock and of Kawasaki disease, a condition that causes inflammation in kids' blood vessels.

MODE OF TRANSMISSION

Droplets: When an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks, droplets with the virus fly into the air from their nose or mouth. Anyone who is within 6 feet of that person can breathe those droplets into their lungs.

Aerosolized Transmission: Research shows that the virus can live in the air for up to 3 hours. When you breathe air that has the virus floating in it, it gets into your lungs.

Surface Transmission: Another way to catch the new coronavirus is when you touch surfaces that someone who has the virus has coughed or sneezed on. You may touch a countertop or doorknob that's contaminated and then touch your nose, mouth, or eyes. The virus can live on surfaces like plastic and stainless steel for 2 to 3 days. To stop it, clean and disinfect all counters, knobs, and other surfaces you and your family touch several times a day.

Faecal-oral: Studies also suggest that virus particles can be found in infected people's poop. But experts aren't sure whether the infection can spread through contact with an infected person's stool. If that person uses the bathroom and doesn't wash their hands, they could infect things and people that they touch.

The virus most often spreads through people who have symptoms. But it may be possible to pass it on without showing any signs. Some people who don't know they've been infected can give it to others. This is called asymptomatic spread. You can also pass it on before you notice any signs of infection, called presymptomatic spread.

DAIGNOSIS

Call your doctor or local health department if you think you've been exposed and have symptoms like:

- Fever of 100 degree F or higher
- Cough
- Trouble breathing

In most states, decisions about who gets tested for COVID-19 are made at the state or local level.

A swab test is the most common method. It looks for signs of the virus in your upper respiratory tract. The person giving the test puts a swab up your nose to get a sample from the back of your nose and throat. That sample usually goes to a lab that looks for viral material

A swab test can only tell whether you have the virus in your body at that moment. But an antibody test can show whether you've ever been exposed to the virus, even if you didn't have symptoms. This is important in officials' efforts to learn how widespread COVID-19 is. In time, it might also help them figure out who's immune to the virus

Coronavirus Prevention
Take these steps:

- **Wash your hands often** with soap and water or clean them with an alcohol-based sanitizer. This kills viruses on your hands.

There are many posters available on the WHO website on how to hand rub using alcohol-based hand rub or how to hand wash using water and soap. Please make note to use the appropriate product and the technique. So, we know the alcohol-based hand rub is preferable if the hands are not visibly soiled. We recommend rubbing the hands for twenty to thirty seconds with this. However, if your hands are soiled, we recommend water and soap and a single-use towel when visibly dirty or contaminated with material. We recommend washing with water and soap for forty to sixty seconds. (WHO)

- **Practice social distancing:** Because you can have and spread the virus without knowing it, you should stay home as much as possible. If you do have to go out, stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- **Cover your nose and mouth in public:** If you have COVID-19, you can spread it even if you don't feel sick. Wear a cloth face covering to protect others. This isn't a replacement for social distancing. You still need to keep a 6-foot distance between yourself and those around you. Don't use a face mask meant for health care workers. And don't put a face covering on anyone who is:
- Under 2 years old
- Having trouble breathing
- Unconscious or can't remove the mask on their own for other reasons
- **Don't touch your face:** Coronaviruses can live on surfaces you touch for several hours. If they get on your hands and you touch your eyes, nose, or mouth, they can get into your body.
- **Clean and disinfect:** You can clean first with soap and water, but disinfect surfaces you touch often, like tables, doorknobs, light switches, toilets, faucets, and sinks. Use a mix of household bleach and water (1/3 cup bleach per gallon of water, or 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water) or a household cleaner that's approved to treat SARS-CoV-2. You can check the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website to see if yours made the list. Wear gloves when you clean and throw them away when you're done.

Coronavirus Vaccine

There's no vaccine yet, but intense research has been underway around the world since scientists shared the virus's genetic makeup in January 2020. Vaccine testing in humans started with record speed in March 2020. More than 100 vaccine projects are in various phases of development.

Coronavirus Treatment

There's no specific treatment for COVID-19. People who get a mild case need care to ease their symptoms, like rest, fluids, and fever control. Take over-the-counter medicine for a sore throat, body aches, and fever. But don't give aspirin to children or teens younger than 19.

You might have heard that you shouldn't take ibuprofen to treat COVID-19 symptoms. But the National Institutes of Health says people who have the virus can use nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) or acetaminophen as usual.

Antibiotics won't help because they treat bacteria, not viruses. If you hear about people with COVID-19 getting antibiotics, it's for an infection that came along with the disease.

People with severe symptoms need to be cared for in the hospital.

Many clinical trials are under way to explore treatments used for other

conditions that could fight COVID-19 and to develop new ones.

Several studies are focused on an antiviral medication called Remdesivir, which was created to fight Ebola. An emergency FDA ruling lets doctors use it for people hospitalized with COVID-19 and in clinical trials. Researchers in the U.S. say remdesivir helped patients in one study recover from the disease 31% faster.

India has permitted the use of Remdesivir in advanced and critical cases. It is expected that its use would be allowed in early stage of disease also.

The FDA also issued an emergency use ruling for hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine. These medications are approved to treat malaria and autoimmune conditions like rheumatoid arthritis and lupus. Studies on their use against COVID-19 have had mixed results, and research is ongoing.

Clinical trials are also under way for Tocilizumab, another medication used to treat autoimmune conditions. And the FDA is also allowing clinical trials and hospital use of blood plasma from people who've had COVID-19 and recovered to help others build immunity. You'll hear this called convalescent plasma.

COVID-19 & HOMOEOPATHY

Homoeopathy is a therapeutic system that uses small doses of various substances to stimulate auto regulatory and self-healing processes (acpjournals.org)

Hippocrates, who is considered the father of medicine, propounded therapeutic treatments based on the principle that human body has the necessary tools to heal itself. According to his postulates, a doctor should simply aid the processes, not interfere directly with them (exploringyourmind.com)

"The physician treats, but nature heals." – Hippocrates, father of medicine.

Ultra Low Dose (ULD) Pharmacology is newly emerging area of attracting great interest in research nowadays. By its nature, this area is percolating into a wide range of disciplines like Pharmacology, Cell biology, Bio-physics and Toxicology

Dr. STUART CLOSE ON Dr.HAHNEMANN

To Hahnemann belongs the honour of having been the first physician to connect biology and psychology with physics in a practical system of medicinal therapeutics, and to give an impulse to studies in biodynamics which has gained momentum continuously ever since.

CONCPET OF ULTRA LOW DOSE PHARMACOLOGY IN HOMOEOPATHIC PARLANCE.

Ultra high dose of Homoeopathic drugs is perhaps the charged particles which have got influence on the pharmacokinetics as well as pharmacodynamics. Absorption is inversely proportional to the size of the particles and as such micro fine preparations of modern drugs are available in the market such as micro fine aspirin, fine particles of Griseofulvin in the form of tablet.Today the nano-technology is also playing an important role in many fields including the field of medicine. Since the Homoeopathic drug particles are of Ultra Dilutions their absorption obviously seems to be rapid. (Pharmacological actions of Homoeopathic drugs, CCRH)

IMMENSE SUCCESS OF HOMOEOPATHY IN PAST EPIDEMICS.

Epidemic	Mortality rate using conventional medicine	Mortality rate using Homoeopathy
Typhus 1830	30%	1.5%
Cholera 1830	40%	7-10%
Cholera 1854	59%	9%
Yellow fever 1850	15%	6%
Yellow fever 1878	50%	5.6%
Diphtheria 1862-1864	83%	16.4%
Cholera 1892	42%	15%
Spanish flu 1918	30%	1.05%

Source: Homoeopathy to the rescue by Julian Winston

(The New England journal of Homoeopathy spring/summer 1998 vol. 7 no.1)

Besides these Homoeopathy has also been reported to be efficacious in played important role in Japanese encephalitis in AP, India, Dengue in India, Leptospirosis in Cuba etc.

Here is something about the Cuban Leptospirosis

An interesting case of Homoeopathy use in epidemics is found in Cuba and its plaguing swamp fever or leptospirosis. The spirochete, Leptospira, is transferred from rats to people during the flood season that inundates Cuba virtually every year. Because of the aftermaths of hurricanes and subsequent water contamination, this epidemic runs rampant throughout the island. Symptoms include fever, diarrhea, jaundice, vomiting, meningitis, liver failure, kidney damage, respiratory illness and death. In a country of little interest to the pharmaceutical industry, Cuban doctors have learned to fend for themselves by incorporating Homoeopathy into their healthcare system.

In 2008, the Finlay Institute, a Cuban research foundation, conducted a full research program on leptospirosis. Cuban doctors and researchers developed a Homoeopathic remedy derived from the bacterium that causes leptospirosis. The remedy was administered as a prophylactic in two doses, seven to nine days apart to 2.4 million people who were considered the most susceptible to the disease. The widescale treatment was administered by a team of Cuban doctors underwritten by the Cuban Ministry of Public Health.

The expected rate of infection—even when allopathic vaccination and antibiotics were used—was a few thousand cases of the disease, including some deaths. After the use of the Homoeopathic nosode, only ten cases of leptospirosis were reported that year among the 2.4 million people who had been treated with the nosode

Remarkably, or rather, not so remarkably given Homoeopathy's history of effectiveness in epidemics in the last two hundred years, the method also produced no mortality of hospitalized patients. Leptospirosis had plagued the small country for several years. Yet in the aftermath of the usual flooding in 2008 there was very nearly no disease among those receiving the Homoeopathic prophylactic! And the cost to the Cuban government? $200,000. The usual cost for allopathic treatment of the disease, which relies solely on drugs and vaccinations, had been more than two million dollars. Allopathic intervention was proved not only pricey and comparatively less effective but was also littered with side effects

Homoeopathy acts upon the psycho-neuro-endocrine axis to improve the innate immunity of an individual to resist infection.

We do not expect Homoeopathy to create a kind of an acquired immunity as vaccines do. Vaccines create a specific antibody against a particular virus. That is why they are working against the virus. Homoeopathic medicine because they are not antigenic, herbal medicine will not produce an antibody against a virus, but it will enhance the cellular immunity at the basic level. So, the medicine Arsenicum Album that has been given as a prophylactic for corona, we have seen in experimental models and previously reported in many places, that it has increased the cellular immunity level.

Arsenic album as one of the constituents in a formulation has been shown to affect HT29 cells and human macrophages. Also, it showed ↓NF-κB hyperactivity (reduced expression of reporter gene GFP in transfect HT29 cells), ↓TNF-α release in macrophages.

Since Homoeopathy is prepared in high dilution molecular components are very minimal hence there are no TOXIC EFFECTS.

- it's safe and easy to consume
- Easy to distribute and dispense
- Easily available
- Cost effective
- Medicines are already listed in Homoeopathic pharmacopeia- hence its tried and tested remedy
- Anybody can take it
- No adverse effects or side effects have been demonstrated so far.

SUCCESS STORIES – COVID-19 & HOMOEOPATHY

There are anecdotal evidences from various states in last 3 months.

- Principal secretary Health Gujrat, announced that all of 1600 patients in quarantine facility who were primary contacts to the covid positive patients were tested negative
- One Police Unit (84 people) who were posted in Malegaon all except one was tested negative while rest of the units who were posted earlier, many were tested positive.
- Telangana adopted this policy very early with their forces and are benefiting

SIMPLE LIFESTYLE HABITS FOR BOOSTING IMMUNITY

1. Good, proper, sound sleep.
2. Proper hydration. Drink plenty of water viz. 1 litre for every 20 Kgs of body weight e.g. If a person weighs 60 kgs. He/she should drink at least 3 litres of water a day.
3. Regular moderate exercise (considering this lockdown – obviously at home) (150 minutes a week as recommended by WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION)
4. Take a balanced diet. Avoid junk food. Avoid packaged food.
5. Avoid sugar if possible try to use substitutes like jaggery, honey, mishri, stevia etc.
6. Consuming immune boosting easily available foods and superfoods like turmeric, giloy,holy basil, mint, fennel seeds ,spinach, ginger, garlic green tea ,almonds etc.
7. Try to deal with your addictions.
8. Practice digital detox for few hours a day.
9. Reduce stress – practice relaxation techniques (yoga, meditation, deep breathing, pranayama, praying as per your religions etc.)pursue your hobbies etc.

Given below is the table of 8 vitamins and minerals that will help to boost immunity.

Vitamin/Mineral	Sources
Vitamin C	Citrus fruits(lemon, orange, sweet lime etc.)Kiwi,Guava,Amla,Spinach,Kale,Strawberry,Papaya etc.
Vitamin A	Red and yellow foods i.e. carrots, mangoes, pumpkin, sweet potatoes
Vitamin E	Almonds, peanuts ,hazelnuts, sunflower seeds, spinach ,broccoli etc.
Vitamin B9	Beans ,peas, leafy vegetables, fortified foods and enriched whole grains
Vitamin D	Oatmeal ,fortified foods,mushroom,egg yolk, fish ...sunlight exposure
Iron	Beans, broccoli, kale, spinach, jaggery, beetroot, dates, tofu, dark chocolate etc.
Selenium	Onion, garlic, broccoli, barley ,brown rice mushroom, sunflower seeds,oats,spinach,lentils,cashew,banana etc.
Zinc	Beans, lentils ,chickpeas, seeds(pumpkin, sesame) banana,nuts whole grains etc.

Dr.Satyajit one of the authors, has been using Ginseng and Echinacea mother tinctures as immune boosters with success over the past 2 months. Echinacea has been documented in scientific studies to boost cellular immunity while Ginseng is known to have adaptogenic effects. Ginensg is very useful in coping with stress along with being an immune booster.

EPILOGUE

"Prevention is better than cure" is so true when it comes to dealing with such a pandemic which has affected various spheres of human life.

To sum up - hand hygiene, respiratoryhygiene, use of masks in public and social distancing should; being updated about the authentic news and staying away from rumours and myths should form an integral part of or lifestyle ,for, only then, we can cope and have better hope.

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