ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER
Volume - 15 | Issue - 04 | April - 2026 | PRINT ISSN No. 2277 - 8179 | DOI : 10.36106/ijsr
INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

HOMOEOPATHIC MANAGEMENT OF ALLERGIC RHINITIS: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Homeopathy

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ABSTRACT

Background: Allergic rhinitis is a common chronic inflammatory condition of the nasal mucosa characterized by sneezing, rhinorrhea, nasal congestion, and itching. It significantly affects quality of life and productivity. Conventional treatment provides symptomatic relief but is often associated with recurrence.**Objective:** To review the role of homoeopathy in the management of allergic rhinitis, highlighting its individualized approach and commonly indicated remedies.**Methods:** A narrative review of literature was conducted using standard homoeopathic materia medica, repertories, and published studies on allergic rhinitis and homoeopathy.**Results:** Evidence suggests that individualized homoeopathic treatment may reduce symptom severity, frequency of episodes, and dependence on conventional medication. Remedies such as Allium cepa, Sabadilla, Natrum muriaticum, and Arsenicum album are frequently indicated based on symptom similarity.**Conclusion:** Homoeopathy offers a safe, individualized, and holistic approach in managing allergic rhinitis. Further high-quality randomized controlled trials are required to strengthen the evidence base.

KEYWORDS

Homoeopathy, Allergic rhinitis, Hay fever, Individualization, Materia medica

INTRODUCTION

Allergic rhinitis is an IgE-mediated inflammatory disorder of the nasal mucosa triggered by exposure to allergens such as pollen, dust, mites, and animal dander. It is characterized by symptoms including sneezing, nasal discharge, nasal obstruction, and itching of the nose, eyes, or throat. The condition affects approximately 10–30% of the global population and is increasingly prevalent due to environmental and lifestyle changes.

The pathophysiology involves sensitization to allergens, leading to the release of inflammatory mediators such as histamine from mast cells. This results in early-phase and late-phase allergic responses, contributing to persistent symptoms and mucosal inflammation.

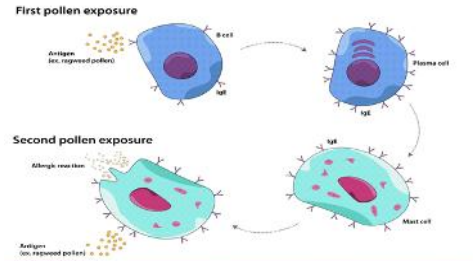
Conventional management includes antihistamines, corticosteroids, and avoidance of allergens. However, these treatments are often associated with temporary relief and recurrence of symptoms upon discontinuation. Homoeopathy, based on the principle of similia similibus curentur, emphasizes individualized treatment considering the patient's totality of symptoms. This holistic approach may offer long-term relief by addressing the underlying susceptibility rather than merely suppressing symptoms.

This review aims to explore the role of homoeopathy in the management of allergic rhinitis and to highlight commonly indicated remedies.

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY OF ALLERGIC RHINITIS

Allergic rhinitis is a classic example of a Type I hypersensitivity reaction mediated by immunoglobulin E (IgE) antibodies, initiated when a genetically predisposed individual is exposed to environmental allergens such as pollen, dust mites, or animal dander. During the sensitization phase, these allergens are processed by antigen-presenting cells and presented to T-helper 2 (Th2) lymphocytes, which stimulate B cells to produce allergen-specific IgE antibodies. These IgE molecules bind to high-affinity receptors on mast cells and basophils, priming them for subsequent exposure. Upon re-exposure to the same allergen, cross-linking of surface-bound IgE on mast cells triggers their degranulation, leading to the rapid release of preformed mediators such as histamine, along with newly synthesized substances like leukotrienes and prostaglandins.

This constitutes the early-phase reaction, characterized by symptoms such as sneezing, nasal itching, and profuse rhinorrhea. Subsequently, a late-phase response develops within hours, involving the recruitment of inflammatory cells such as eosinophils, basophils, and T lymphocytes, resulting in sustained inflammation, mucosal edema, and nasal congestion. The persistence of these immunological and inflammatory processes contributes to chronic mucosal hypersensitivity, epithelial damage, and recurrent symptomatology, thereby significantly affecting the patient's quality of life.



Mechanism of allergic reaction

HOMEOPATHIC APPROACH

Homoeopathy adopts an individualized and holistic approach in the management of allergic rhinitis, focusing on the patient as a whole rather than merely the disease. It involves detailed case taking that encompasses mental, emotional, and physical symptoms, along with general characteristics such as thermal preferences, appetite, and sleep patterns. Particular attention is given to identifying causative and maintaining factors, including environmental triggers, lifestyle habits, and psychological stressors. Based on the totality of symptoms, each case is analyzed and repertorized to select the most appropriate remedy, known as the *similimum*, which closely matches the patient's symptom profile. Medicines are prescribed in minimum doses and suitable potencies, in accordance with homoeopathic principles, to stimulate the body's vital force. This individualized therapeutic approach aims not only to alleviate symptoms but also to enhance the body's inherent healing capacity and reduce susceptibility to recurrent allergic episodes.

COMMONLY INDICATED HOMOEOPATHIC REMEDIES

Allium cepa

Allium cepa is one of the most frequently indicated remedies in allergic rhinitis, particularly when symptoms resemble those produced by exposure to raw onion. It is characterized by profuse, watery, acrid nasal discharge that excoriates the upper lip and nostrils, while lacrimation remains bland and non-irritating—an important keynote. Patients experience frequent sneezing, especially on entering a warm

room, with marked relief in open air. Burning irritation in the nasal passages and a constant desire to rub the nose are commonly observed. It is especially useful in acute allergic conditions triggered by pollen or dust.

Sabadilla

Sabadilla is prominently indicated in cases with paroxysmal, spasmodic sneezing occurring in rapid succession. Sneezing is often triggered by odors, cold air, or allergens. It is associated with intense itching in the nose, throat, and palate, along with a tickling sensation in the nasal passages. Patients show marked sensitivity to smells, which aggravate symptoms. Watery nasal discharge and lacrimation may be present. This remedy is particularly suited to individuals with hypersensitivity and pronounced mucosal irritation.

Natrum muriaticum

Natrum muriaticum is indicated in chronic or recurrent allergic rhinitis with thin, watery nasal discharge resembling egg white. Sneezing is typically worse in the morning or on exposure to sunlight. Nasal obstruction may alternate with profuse discharge. A characteristic feature is the association with emotional factors such as suppressed grief or long-standing stress, which may act as triggers. Patients may also experience dryness of mucous membranes, headache, or anosmia. It is particularly useful where emotional disturbances play a significant role.

Arsenicum album

Arsenicum album is suited to cases with thin, watery, excoriating nasal discharge accompanied by intense burning in the nostrils and nasal passages. Symptoms are usually worse at night and in cold environments. Patients exhibit marked restlessness, anxiety, and weakness disproportionate to their condition. There may be frequent sneezing, nasal obstruction, and a sense of internal dryness. This remedy is especially indicated where allergic symptoms are associated with burning sensations and significant mental agitation.

Pulsatilla nigricans

Pulsatilla nigricans is indicated in patients with thick, bland, yellowish or greenish nasal discharge that does not cause irritation. Symptoms are aggravated in warm, stuffy rooms and improve in open, fresh air. Patients often have a mild, gentle disposition and seek company and emotional reassurance. Nasal obstruction, loss of smell, and shifting symptoms are commonly seen. It is particularly useful in cases where symptoms are changeable and influenced by environmental conditions.

Kali bichromicum

Kali bichromicum is an important remedy in allergic rhinitis associated with sinus involvement. It is characterized by thick, tenacious, stringy nasal discharge that can be drawn into long threads. The discharge is usually yellow or green and may cause nasal blockage. Patients often complain of pressure or pain at the root of the nose, extending to the frontal sinuses. Postnasal drip and crust formation are common. Symptoms are worse in cold weather and in the morning, and better from warmth. It is especially indicated in cases complicated by sinusitis with localized pain and tough secretions.

DISCUSSION

Homoeopathy provides a patient-centered approach that addresses both physical symptoms and underlying susceptibility. Unlike conventional treatment, which mainly targets histamine pathways, homoeopathy aims to modulate the patient's overall response to allergens.

The individualized nature of treatment makes it particularly suitable for allergic rhinitis, where symptom presentation varies widely among patients. Remedies such as *Allium cepa* and *Sabadilla* closely correspond to the symptomatology of acute allergic episodes, while constitutional remedies like *Natrum muriaticum* help in long-term management.

Despite promising results, variability in study design and lack of large-scale trials limit the generalizability of findings.

CONCLUSION

Homeopathy presents promising, safe, patient-centered therapeutic modality in the management of allergic rhinitis, addressing not only the symptomatic manifestations but also the underlying individual susceptibility and predisposition. By emphasizing individualized remedy selection based on the totality of symptoms—including mental, emotional, and physical dimensions—it offers holistic approach that aligns closely with multifactorial pathophysiology of allergic rhinitis. Evidence from clinical observations and available studies suggests that homoeopathic treatment may contribute to sustained symptom relief, reduction in recurrence, and decreased dependency on conventional pharmacotherapy, thereby improving overall quality of life.

However, despite these encouraging findings, the current evidence base is limited by methodological constraints, including small sample sizes and variability in study designs. Therefore, there is a pressing need for well-designed, large-scale randomized controlled trials and standardized research methodologies to further validate the efficacy and reproducibility of homoeopathic interventions. Integrating homoeopathy into evidence-based clinical practice could potentially enhance comprehensive care in allergic rhinitis, provided that future research substantiates its therapeutic benefits with robust scientific evidence.

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