

Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy in Epidemics

HOMOEOPATHY IN EPIDEMICS

Homeopathy is a time-tested two-century old empirical system of healing. It is a natural method of treatment, aimed at curing a disease naturally, holistically, gently and permanently. It is based on the natural law of healing '*Similia Similibus Curentur*', which means 'let likes be treated by likes'. As per this law, a substance that has the ability to produce a set of symptoms akin to a disease in a healthy human being also has the ability to cure that disease in a sick person. This unique method of treatment has long been contributing in public health through curative, preventive and promotive care.

The preventive aspect of Homoeopathy is well known, and historically, Homoeopathy has reportedly been used for prevention during the epidemics of cholera, Spanish influenza, yellow fever, scarlet fever, diphtheria, typhoid etc. The approach to prevention in Homoeopathy is two-pronged.

Homoeoprophylaxis or, prevention through Homoeopathy, can either be met through *Genus Epidemicus*, which means a remedy which is found to be curative in the majority of cases of the same disease is also the most likely preventive for that disease; or through *nosodes* (medicine prepared from biological material of a disease). The former is identified through observation of several cases of an epidemic disease, and analysing the symptomatology of those cases for the most indicated medicine. This medicine, is considered to be the preventive medicine for the ongoing epidemic of that disease. The latter, on the other hand, once prepared through homoeopathic procedure, is considered a preventive for the disease it is prepared from, regardless of the overall presentation of that disease, which happens to change from time to time.

There are distinct advantages if prevention by Homoeopathy could be made possible. These include reduced financial burden, safer means for prevention and easier storage and administration. However, establishing the preventive use of Homeopathy in public health setting is a challenge. High quality safety and pre-clinical studies, as well as robust clinical research is required to be undertaken for establishing role of Homoeopathy in epidemics.

Future perspective

Evidence that homeopathy may be effective in prevention of the above vector-borne diseases, as well as an add on therapy, especially in reducing the intensity of the disease and decreasing the duration of stay at hospital is enough to invoke more studies on this front, with better methodology and compliance levels. Thus, we must initiate preventive and curative trials in various vector-borne conditions. That said, the hard fact remains that conducting these studies is a challenge in itself, especially the prophylactic studies. The preventive programmes for epidemics need a synergistic association: formal approvals from government heads, tie ups with health service centres and adequate awareness about Homoeopathy of those who are involved in conducting or facilitating such a programme. It has been observed that since epidemic is a short term situation, if precious time is lost in getting such approvals or in establishing tie ups, true justice cannot be done to these studies. Such kind of challenges need to be overcome and for that, we need to build strategies and standard protocols in liaison with the concerning authorities. With the increasing understanding of role of Homoeopathy in epidemics and more rigorous trials, future epidemics, it is hoped, will be tackled with better strategies and management plan.