

Homeopathy in the Treatment of Viral Diseases: Scientific Data on the Basis of which it is Possible to Reason Scientifically on the Therapeutic Potential of Homeopathic Medicines

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ABSTRACT

Homeopathy, discovered about two centuries ago by Samuel Hahnemann, is a therapy based on the so-called “law of similarity”, or, “*similia similibus curentur*”, according to which “similar” is cured by “similar”: the patient is treated with the administration of “small doses” of substances that, if administered in “high doses” to a healthy subject, would cause “similar” symptoms to those suffered by the patient. Based on the law of similarity, various pathologies are treated with homeopathy, including viral pathologies. Various scientific studies demonstrate the effectiveness of homeopathy in some viral pathologies, even serious ones, and several scientific articles report extremely interesting data that have been acquired during important and rigorous in vitro studies, in vivo studies and clinical studies. Although studies on homeopathy need to be further explored, with regard to the treatment of viral pathologies, it is necessary to take into account the scientific data currently available on the basis of which it is possible to scientifically reason about the therapeutic potential of homeopathic “small doses” and their efficacy demonstrated through some important in vivo studies, in vitro studies and clinical studies,

Keywords: virus, viral pathologies, homeopathy, law of similarity, Dengue virus.

INTRODUCTION

Homeopathy is a therapy based on the so-called “law of similarity”, “*similia similibus curentur*”: “the principle of therapeutic similarity (*similia similibus curentur*) is the main scientific foundation and was described by several exponents of medicine since Hippocrates in ancient Greece” [1]. According to the law of similarity, “similar” is cured with “similar”, that is, the patient is cured with the administration of “small doses” of substances that, if administered in “high doses” to a healthy subject, would cause “similar” symptoms to those suffered by the patient. The reason why homeopathy is often criticized is due precisely to the use of “small” homeopathic doses, too diluted, “ultradiluted”. Homeopathy, whose undisputed founder was Samuel Hahnemann [2], is a therapy through which it is possible to cure many pathologies, including viral pathologies. Homeopathy is a real clinical methodology, in fact, homeopathic

therapy arises after a broad, complex and articulated diagnosis. Several scientific researches demonstrate the efficacy of homeopathy in the treatment of viral pathologies and such efficacy, in a scientific way, can be adequately evaluated through the analysis of the data found during some important and rigorous in vitro studies, in vivo studies and clinical studies.

METHODS

To acquire information on the effectiveness of homeopathy in viral pathologies, we carried out a systematic bibliographic search and used the electronic biomedical database PubMed/MEDLINE and the web search engine Google Scholar. During the bibliographic search, we constantly took into account the authoritativeness of the authors of the articles and their affiliations.

RESULTS

During our bibliographic research, we took into account some important in vitro studies, in vivo studies, clinical studies and we reasoned on the significant results reported in the scientific articles by the authoritative authors.

In Vitro and In Vivo Studies

In an authoritative article by Aphale *et al.* the results obtained during a study on Arsenicum 30C are reported. The authors state: “The therapeutic effectiveness of mesenchymal stem cells (MSCs) and their secretome can be enhanced by means of physical, chemical and biological preconditioning. Arsenicum album 30C (AA30) has been one of the leading homeopathic medicines used in prophylaxis against SARS-CoV-2 infection”. In the conclusions, the authors clearly report: “Our data demonstrate that AA30 preconditioning enhances the therapeutic potency of MSCs and their secretome” [3]. In an authoritative article by Sinha *et al.* the results of a study on the homeopathic medicine Rhus tox 6C in relation to Dengue virus infection are reported. The authoritative authors, in the conclusion and discussion, state: “In our experiments, we found that Rhus tox 6C could increase cell size and help organization of cells on the solid surface as observed under scanning electron microscope although the total number of cells was decreased. Moreover, Rhus tox 6C treated cells were healthier as indicated by less number of deformed, clump, and diploform cells” [4]. Regarding the demonstrated *in vitro* effects, antiviral action and anti-inflammatory action of the homeopathic medicine Rhus Tox, it is interesting to mention an interesting review article by Shinde *et al.* in which the authoritative authors clearly state: “The homeopathic remedy Rhus Tox has been widely used to treat herpes and has shown *in vitro* anti-inflammatory effects in previous studies”, furthermore, “the review article proposes the anti-inflammatory and antiviral action of the homeopathic remedy Rhus Tox which can be used in crisis conditions when the physician doubts the simillimum, as it prevents further outbreaks of HSV infection” [5]. In an authoritative article by Arumugam *et al.* the results of an interesting study on the antiviral activity of the homeopathic medicine Cinchona officinalis (CO) against Covid-19 are reported. In the article the authoritative authors state: “The cytotoxicity of several homeopathic formulations, including CO mother tincture (CO-MT), was also checked on VeroE6 cells”, furthermore, the authors claim that “in vitro assays showed that homeopathic CO-MT was not cytotoxic and that CO-MT and remdesivir respectively caused 89% and 99% inhibition of SARS-CoV-2 infection in VeroE6 cells”: The authors conclude: “Based on this in silico and in vitro evidence, we propose CO-MT as a promising antiviral medicine candidate for treating COVID-19” [6]. In an authoritative article by Bukhsh a study is reported according to which it is demonstrated that highly ultra-diluted

homeopathic remedies have demonstrable antiviral effects [7]. We believe it is interesting to mention, in this context, also an article on veterinary medicine by Nefedchenko *et al.*: this article reports the results of a study regarding the *in vitro* and *in vivo* activity of homeopathic drugs against bovine herpesvirus-1 and bovine viral diarrhea virus 1 [8].

Clinical Studies

In the article “Covid 19: cases cured with Homoeopathy” by Chimthanawala some extremely interesting results are reported: “Homoeopathy has shown definite results in mild to moderate and moderate to severe cases up to 80% relief in mild to moderate 60% in moderate to severe. Mild to moderate cases where only Homoeopathy was given: China-ars, Ferrum-p, and Gelsemium were satisfactory. Baptisia and Carb-v adjuvant to Allopathy was also satisfactory” [9]. In an authoritative article by Kaur *et al* the results of an interesting study are reported. The authoritative authors state that “the objective of this study is to assess the efficacy of customized Homeopathic medicines, when used as an add-on treatment to Standard of Care (SOC), in patients suffering from moderate to severe COVID-19 infection” and conclude by saying that “homoeopathy, as add-on therapy with SOC for COVID-19 management, demonstrates a reduction in mortality and morbidity, by reduced requirement of oxygen and hospitalization” [10]. Saha *et al.*, in an authoritative article, report the results obtained during a very interesting study. The authoritative authors state that “this trial attempts to identify the preliminary evidence of the efficacy of individualized homeopathic medicines (IHMs) against placebos in the treatment of post-COVID-19 fatigue in adults”, furthermore, the authors clearly state that “IHMs produced significantly better effects than placebos in the treatment of post-COVID-19 fatigue in adults” [11]. In an authoritative article by Holandino *et al.* the results obtained during a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial on 600 children of the Brazilian Public Health Service are reported; the study is very interesting and is aimed at evaluating the use of homeopathy to prevent the symptoms of human influenza and acute respiratory infections. What is stated by the authoritative authors is extremely clear: “Besides the proved efficacy of homeopathic medicines, the homeopathic treatment presents the additional advantages that include the low cost of compounding medicine and the absence of registered adverse effects, which put this therapeutic as a very useful option for the Public Health Services” [12]. In an authoritative article by Siqueria *et al.* the results of a blind, randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trial aimed at evaluating the action of homeopathic medicines for the prevention of influenza and acute respiratory tract infections in children are reported. In the article the authoritative authors state: “These results suggested that the use of homeopathic medicines minimized the number of flu and acute respiratory infection symptomatic episodes in children, signaling that the homeopathic prophylactic potential should be investigated in further studies” [13]. In an article by Rastogi *et al.* the results of a very interesting study on HIV are reported, in fact, the authoritative authors write: “This study was aimed to evaluate the immuno-modulator role of homeopathic remedies in Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) infection”, furthermore, “the study suggests a possible role of homeopathic treatment in HIV infection in symptomatic phase, as evidenced by a statistically significant elevation of baseline immune status in persistent generalized lymphadenopathy” [14]. In an article by Ullman it is clearly stated: “As a result of the growing number of people with drug-resistant HIV infection taking structured treatment interruptions, homeopathic medicine may play a useful role as an adjunctive and/or alternative therapy” [15]. In an article by Malapane *et al.*, it is stated: “The homeopathic complex used in this study exhibited significant anti-inflammatory and pain-relieving qualities in children with acute viral tonsillitis”

[16]. Regarding prophylaxis, we cite an article by Chaudhary *et al.* which states: "Homoeopathy has played a notable role in managing epidemics in the past. The Ministry of Ayush, Government of India, declared Arsenicum album 30 C as a prophylactic for Covid-19, which was followed by the distribution of the medicine across India" [17]. The article reports the results of an extremely interesting study, a retrospective analysis from mass-level data, and the results are truly considerable: "Consumption of the prophylactic significantly reduced the risk of contracting Covid-19 in high-risk groups as compared to their counterparts". The article clearly states: "The study concludes that Arsenicum album 30 C has a potential prophylactic effect against Covid-19" [17]. In this context we would like to remember that homeopathy was used not only in the Covid-19 pandemic, but also in another devastating pandemic: «The "Spanish Flu" began in 1918 and was the most devastating pandemic in human history that had ever been, claiming more lives than World War I. The flu virus had not yet been discovered, and the usual therapy measures were merely symptomatic. In many parts of the world the pandemic was treated by homeopaths» [18].

DISCUSSION

The discussion starts from a fixed point: there are authoritative scientific articles that report extremely important results obtained during rigorous in vitro studies, in vivo studies and clinical studies. Based on these authoritative studies it is possible to reason scientifically about the therapeutic potential of homeopathic "small doses". It is well known that skepticism towards homeopathy is quite widespread, but equally widespread is the scientific dogmatism that supports and fuels skepticism. To avoid falling into skeptical or dogmatic attitudes, we must appeal to science, to science that is open and not closed to comparison, to science that provides useful information to understand, reflect, reason scientifically. In this article, scientific research is cited that helps to better understand homeopathy and to learn that, in the treatment of even serious viral diseases, such as AIDS and Covid-19, homeopathic treatment can prove useful and effective. Based on this last statement, we sincerely hope that the discussion on homeopathy will become more and more interesting and engaging.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the homeopathic treatment of viral diseases, we believe that the results and scientific data currently available are extremely encouraging, therefore, we believe that scientific research on homeopathy should be strongly supported.

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