

Treating Alcoholism In The Global Era By Homeopathy

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Abstracts: Background: Alcoholism is one of the world's costly drug use problem. In addition, an alcoholic can develop multiple forms of addiction to alcohol simultaneously such as psychological, metabolic, and neuro-chemical. This behaviour interferes with the alcoholic's normal personal, family, social, or work life. Here the best way of Homeopathic mode of treatment is to treat the patient by giving constitutional medicine along with moral support. [Shah P NJIRM 2015; 6(2):117-120]

Key Words: Alcoholism, Psychology, homeopathic medicine.

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Introduction: Definition: Addiction means a recurring compulsion by an individual to engage in some specific activity despite harmful consequences to the individual health, mental state or social life; it may be alcohol, chocolate or work, sex or church.

Classification - The DSM-IV classification uses blanket terms – Substance Dependence, Substance Abuse and Substance Use Disorders.

Problem in the world - According to WHO, psychoactive substance use poses a significant threat to health, and the social and economic fabric of families, communities and nations. The extent of worldwide psychoactive substance use is estimated at 2 billion alcohol users, 1.3 billion smokers and 185 million drug users^[2]

The global burden of these three psychoactive substance categories varies across the WHO Regions. The disease burden in Disability Adjusted Life Years (**DALYs**) is significantly higher in Europe and the Western Pacific than in Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean. Also the share of the burden for the different substances varies tobacco is the largest burden in Europe and South-East Asia, *while alcohol poses the largest burden in Africa, the Americas, and the Western Pacific.*

The sex ratio for the attributable deaths of psychoactive substance use varies from 80% male for tobacco and illicit drug use and 90% for alcohol. Illicit drug use inflicts its mortality burden earliest in life, alcohol also mainly (65%) before the age of 60, while 70% of the tobacco deaths occur after the age of 60. For more data on the global burden of psychoactive substance use and other risk

factors please see the homepage of the World Health Report 2002.

Who is At Risk?

Teenagers at risk for developing serious alcohol include those:

- With a family history of substance abuse
- Who are depressed
- Who have low self-esteem
- Who feel like they don't fit in or are out of the mainstream

Warning Signs of Teen Substance Abuse -

Physical -

- Fatigue
- Repeated health complaints
- Red and glazed eyes
- Lasting cough

Emotional -

- Personality change irritability
- Sudden mood changes
- Irresponsible behaviour
- Low self-esteem
- Poor judgment
- Depression
- General lack of interest

Family -

- Starting arguments
- Negative attitude
- Breaking rules
- Withdrawing from family
- Secretiveness

School -

- Decreased interest

- Negative attitude
- Drop in grades
- Many absences
- Truancy
- Discipline problems

Counseling - Individual and/or group and other behavioral therapies are critical components of effective treatment. Addicted individuals with coexisting mental disorders should have both disorders treated in an integrated way. Because addictive disorders and mental disorders often occur in the same individual, individuals should be assessed and treated for the co-occurrence of the other type of disorder. Strong motivation can facilitate the treatment process. Sanctions or enticements in the family, school setting, or juvenile justice system can increase significantly both treatment entry and retention rates and the success of drug treatment interventions. Recovery from addiction can be a long-term process and frequently requires multiple episodes of treatment.

Homeopathic approach - Homoeopathy is a non-toxic system of medicine that uses highly-diluted remedies to treat illness and relieve discomfort in a wide variety of health conditions. It is thought that homeopathic remedies are able to stimulate a person's bodily systems to deal with stress and illness more efficiently. Research is currently being undertaken to understand how and why these remedies work on the mental and physical level. Specific homeopathic remedies may be helpful during the period of withdrawal from alcohol or drugs. Holistic approaches to addiction and alcoholism can be of great assistance throughout the stages of recovery.

Alcoholism is a chronic, often progressive disease that can be fatal. The condition involves a preoccupation with alcohol and impaired control over alcohol intake. Alcoholism usually involves physical dependence on the drug alcohol, but genetic, psychological and social factors contribute to this addiction. Homeopathy too has its role to help addicts in taking them out of this mire of addiction. In emergencies and acute phases various homeopathic remedies can be used on acute symptom totality. Homeopathy also offers

constitutional treatment to remove the craving, boost, general health, vitality, self-control and confidence. After stopping drinking it is important to eat a healthy, varied diet and to make up deficiencies of Vitamins A, B, C, D, K, folic acid, bioflavinoids, iron, manganese, potassium, and Cysteine (an amino acid found in dairy products, whole grains, nuts and seeds). A high-dose multivitamin and mineral supplement would be the most convenient way of doing this in the first month after stopping drinking. Regular intake of all the nutrients mentioned above is advised even for moderate social drinkers. Evening primrose oil would also be beneficial.

Burton, in his Anatomy of Melancholy, also states "If a drunken man gets a child it will never likely have a good brain".

Reportorial approach - The Complete repertory mentions over a hundreds of Homeopathic remedies for alcohol abuse: in complete repertory Mind Alcoholism, dipsomania: **Total Drugs - 137**

Homoeopathic Therapeutic approach - Agaricus – it will sometimes control the characteristic tremor when Nux fails.

Arsenic - Visions of ghosts, with great weakness; diseases from overuse of alcohol;

Avena sativa- Alcoholism where the victim is nervous and sleepless almost to the point of delirium tremens. It is also a useful remedy in the opium and cocaine habits.

Calcarea carbonica - Belladonna is easily distinguished from Opium, and Calcarea comes in as a last resort after Belladonna and Stramonium have ceased to do good.

Cannabis indica - An acute alcoholism. Some violence, talkativeness and active mind; subjects crowd upon it, delusions and hallucination relate to exaggerated subjects time, space, etc.; face flushed, pupils dilated, perspires easily. Surprise is constantly expressed on the countenance.

Capsicum - In ten drop doses of the tincture will stop the morning vomiting, sinking at the pit of the stomach and intense craving for alcohol in

dipsomania, and promote the appetite. It reduces the agitation and tremor and induces calm sleep. Delirium tremens will often be speedily relieved by Capsicum.

Cantharis - Continual attempts to bite; sexual excitement; face pale, yellow, dysuria. Spiritus glandium quercus. **Burnett** recommended this remedy as an antidote to the affects of alcohol, and Dr.A.F.Schulz, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, reported to the writer that in his opinion it will frequently cause disgust for alcoholic beverages. He has had success from its use.

Nux vomica –Nux corresponds to the tremor, to the nervous affection, to the headache, to the bad taste. It also corresponds to delirium tremens, where every little noise frightens and the victim finds no rest any place, springs up at night and has frightful visions. The patient is still under the influence of liquor or any of the stages of alcoholism.

Opium- It indicated in "old sinners" who have had the delirium tremens over and over again. expression of fright or terror, they have visions of animals springing up everywhere, they see ghosts, the sleep is uneasy, and the breathing is stertorous, simulating apoplexy. Fears darkness, ghosts, with the same desire to escape.

Pulsatilla - It may be given low. "Should it produce a diarrhea is the proper antidote." (**Dr. Luther Peck.**) The constant craving for brandy reminds one of Sulphur, Nux vomica and Arsenicum, all of which have craving for spirituous liquors.

Phosphorus it sees faces peering at him from all parts of the room

Sulphuric acid- This is the remedy for chronic alcoholism. It corresponds to inebriates on their last, who are pale and shriveled and cold, whose stomach will not tolerate the slightest amount of food. They cannot drink water unless it be well whiskied. They are quick and hasty in everything, and have a great and constant craving for brandy. It comes in long after Nux vomica, perhaps after Keely and other cures have failed over and over again. It suits the sour breath and vomiting of alcoholic dyspepsia.

Ranunculus bulbosus – it is given in the tincture has been found to be most calming in attacks of delirium tremens. It is undoubtedly one of our best remedies in the treatment of acute alcoholism.

Strophanthus – it has also been successfully used.

Tartar emetic –it may be useful when mucous gastric derangement predominates as after beer, with tendency to pneumonia, and accompanied by cool sweat.

Research on alcoholism in world

1. A double blind, placebo-controlled trial ^[4] applying homeopathy to chemical dependency was done by the Hahnemann College of Homeopathy, Albany, California. The results showed decreased relapse rate of recovering alcoholics undergoing homeopathic treatment. **1993**
2. The outcome of the study shows that homeopathic medicines are efficacious in the management of withdrawal symptoms of drug dependents and can check the menace of the chemical dependency. The results have prompted CCRH to take up this study in collaboration with the Society for Promotion of Youth and Masses (SPYM) from **April 2008**.

Conclusion- The research evidence, though limited, strongly corroborates the clinical experience gathered by homeopaths over the past 200 years. A few large scale multi-centric trials are required to confirm the existing research evidence and if found in favor of homeopathy, it will help establish homeopathy as the treatment modality of choice for all substance abuse patients.

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Conflict of interest: None

Funding: None

Cite this Article as: Shah P. Gupta D, Treating Alcoholism In The Global Era By Homeopathy. Natl J Integr Res Med 2015; 6(4): page no as in the Journal.
