

Evaluating the Role of Homoeopathic Constitutional Treatment in the Management of Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD): An Experimental Study

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ABSTRACT

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a widespread chronic condition that significantly affects quality of life through symptoms such as heartburn, regurgitation, and sleep disturbances. Conventional therapies, though effective in symptom control, often fail to address the root cause and may lead to side effects. This study explores the efficacy of individualized homoeopathic constitutional treatment in managing GERD. Thirty patients were enrolled and treated over six months, with symptom severity measured using the FSSG scale. The findings revealed statistically significant improvement in symptoms and quality of life, suggesting that homoeopathic intervention may offer a viable alternative for GERD management.

Keywords: Gastroesophageal reflux disease, Homoeopathy, FSSG Scale, Constitutional medicine, Miasmatic diagnosis, Alternative medicine

1. INTRODUCTION

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a chronic and increasingly prevalent gastrointestinal condition characterized by the retrograde movement of gastric contents into the esophagus, causing troublesome symptoms such as heartburn and regurgitation. Globally, GERD affects approximately 20% of the adult population, with a growing incidence in South-East Asia, including India. GERD has a significant impact on quality of life, interfering with daily activities, sleep, work productivity, and psychological well-being. Conventional treatment primarily includes proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), H2 receptor blockers, and in some cases surgical interventions, which, though effective in symptom management, do not address

the underlying causes and are often associated with adverse effects during long-term use. Homoeopathy, a system of individualized medicine based on the principle of "like cures like," offers a holistic alternative, particularly in chronic diseases like GERD. This study aimed to assess the effectiveness of constitutional homoeopathic treatment in the management of GERD and its associated symptoms, using the Frequency Scale for the Symptoms of Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (FSSG) as a tool for outcome evaluation.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY

This experimental uncontrolled study was conducted over a period of 18 months in the outpatient and inpatient departments of a homoeopathic medical college and associated clinics. A total of 30 patients diagnosed with GERD based on clinical history and diagnostic criteria were enrolled using a simple random sampling method. Inclusion criteria encompassed both sexes aged 20 to 60 years, presenting with classic symptoms such as heartburn, acid regurgitation, and nausea. Patients with GERD secondary to prolonged NSAID use, gross pathological changes, malignancies, pregnancy, or immunocompromised conditions were excluded. Each case was thoroughly evaluated through detailed case taking, including mental and physical symptoms, lifestyle assessment, miasmatic background, and susceptibility level. The FSSG scale was used to quantify symptom severity before and after treatment. Based on the totality of symptoms, homoeopathic constitutional remedies were selected and prescribed in appropriate potencies, with monthly follow-ups conducted for six months. Outcome assessment was based on changes in FSSG scores and subjective improvement in general well-being. Statistical analysis of the pre- and post-treatment scores was performed using the paired Student's t-test to determine the significance of clinical changes.

3. RESULTS

The study included 30 participants, with the majority falling in the 30–40 years age group. Males comprised 53% of the sample, while females accounted for 47%. Initial assessment using the FSSG scale revealed that 63% of the patients had severe symptoms, while 37% fell in the moderate category. Post-treatment assessment demonstrated a significant shift, with 83% of patients falling into the mild category and 10% showing complete recovery, with an FSSG score of zero. Statistically, the improvement in FSSG scores post-treatment was highly significant ($p < 0.001$). Regarding response outcomes, 90% of patients showed improvement, and 10% recovered completely. No patient showed deterioration or status quo. The most commonly prescribed remedies were Nux vomica (20%), Phosphorus (17%), and Arsenicum album (10%). Miasmatic analysis revealed that 77% of cases were predominantly psoric, supporting the classical understanding of GERD's chronic and functional nature. Susceptibility was moderate in 96.6% of the cases, guiding the potency selection primarily to 200C. No adverse events were reported during the course of treatment.

Age Group	Number of Patients	Percentage
20–30 years	8	26.6%
30–40 years	9	30%
40–50 years	7	23.3%
50–60 years	6	20%

Table 1: Age-wise distribution of GERD patients.

Sr. No	FSSG scale grading	Number of patients before treatment	Number of patients after treatment
1	Zero	00	03
2	Mild (1-8)	00	25
3	Moderate (9-16)	11	02
4	Severe (17-24)	19	00
	Total	30	30

Table no.2: Distribution of cases as per FSSG scale grade before and after treatment

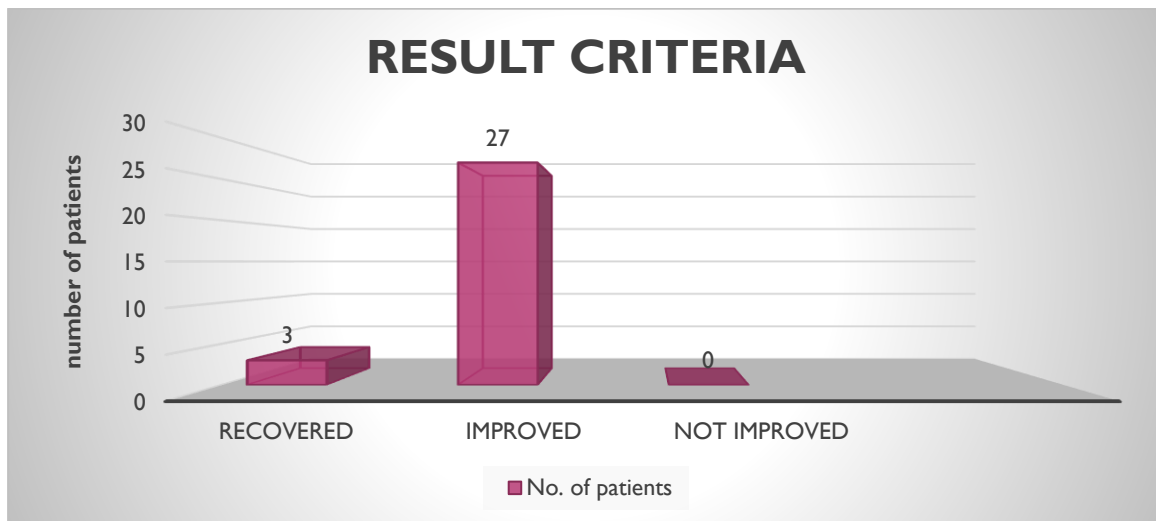


Figure 1: Status of Response of Patients

Sr. No	Extra esophageal symptoms	Cases number	Percentage
1	Sleeplessness	6,30	6.66%
2	Generalized weakness	1,2,4,8,24	16.66%
3	Constipation	1,4,7,18,21	16.66%
4	Headache	3,4,7,8,11,19,24	23.33%
5	Dry cough	3,6,8,11,12,13,14,15,16,18,20,22,23,29,30	50%
6	Hiccough	27,28	6.66%
7	Vertigo	8,24	6.66%
8	Palpitations	9,24	6.66%
9	Asthma	15	3.33%
10	Abortion in first trimester	17	3.33%
11	Dental erosion	13,25	6.66%

Table 3: Extraesophageal symptoms with GERD

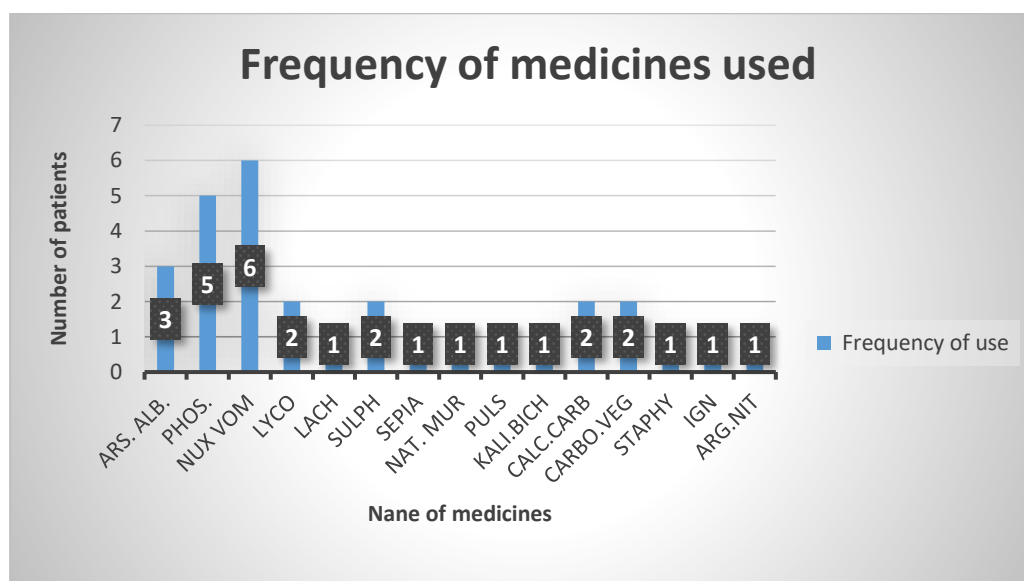


Figure 2 Frequency of medicines used in cases of GERD

4. DISCUSSION

The results of this study suggest that individualized constitutional homoeopathic treatment has a beneficial effect in managing GERD. The significant reduction in FSSG scores and subjective improvement reported by patients underscore the therapeutic potential of homoeopathy in chronic functional gastrointestinal disorders. These findings align with the holistic philosophy of homoeopathy, where treatment is tailored to the patient's mental, emotional, and physical constitution. The dominance of psoric miasm in the patient group reflects the functional and reversible nature of GERD, which responds well to such treatment. Remedies like *Nux vomica* and *Phosphorus* have well-documented indications for gastrointestinal dysfunctions, including acid reflux, irritability, and stress-related dyspepsia—further emphasizing the mind-body connection explored in this study. This approach also avoids the long-term complications associated with conventional GERD management such as nutrient malabsorption, microbial imbalances, and drug dependency. The study's limitation includes the lack of a control group, relatively small sample size, and the inability to blind interventions due to the nature of homoeopathic practice. Nonetheless, the consistent pattern of clinical improvement suggests that homoeopathy deserves greater consideration as a complementary approach in GERD management, especially in patients with recurrent symptoms and psychosomatic contributions.

5. CONCLUSION

This experimental study demonstrates that constitutional homoeopathic treatment can significantly reduce symptoms of GERD and improve quality of life. The approach addresses not only the physiological manifestations of reflux but also the psychological and emotional dimensions often contributing to the chronicity of the disease. The results provide a strong basis for further investigation through larger randomized controlled trials to explore the broader applicability of homoeopathy in gastroenterological disorders. The findings reaffirm the importance of individualized holistic care and suggest that homoeopathy may serve as a viable, safe, and effective modality in the long-term management of GERD.

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