



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Beyond The Dose: Discovering The Power Of External Application In Homeopathy

Dr. Anushree Gupta¹; Dr. Sweety Tripathi ¹; Dr. Sarvepriya Malik²

¹Assistant Professor (Department of Organon of Medicine, BAKSON HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL)

²Associate Professor (Department of Organon of Medicine, BAKSON HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL)

ABSTRACT:

External applications have been used from the ROMAN era to the present day on the belief that the removal of the diseases from the local areas means annihilation of the disease in its whole extent. But it was Dr. Hahnemann who said that the external or outward manifestation are the reflections of the internally deranged dynamic vital force. The external manifestations indicate the inner disease and removal of just these external manifestations doesn't mean curing the disease.

KEYWORDS: External application, ointment, liniment, similimum, homoeopathy

INTRODUCTION:

Homeopathy is a scientific method to promote healing which is efficient, gentle and permanent based on the application of the law of similars. Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, a German Physician who lived between 1755-1843 discovered this ideal system of therapeutics by bringing together a number of discoveries and reflections found throughout the history of medicine. Homeopathy treats sick people with remedies which produce in healthy people; symptoms similar to those of the disease needed to be overcome. It is a holistic system of medicine that understands that sickness is exhibited in the form of a unique set of symptoms that are produced by mind and body together. The sum of all these mental, emotional, and physical symptoms reflects the overall health and it is exactly what needs to be treated. Homoeopathy considers the patient's symptoms as a whole and treats you as a whole.

External Application:

EXTERNAL application!! These words bring different visions to mind! Visions of mustard plasters, onion poultices, bone plasters, and saline or anything used in common as a home remedy or used by the most skillful physicians. These have been used from time immemorial to the present day. This method was based on the general belief that the outward manifestations are disease itself and if these manifestations are removed, the disease would be cured itself. [1]

This doctrine was prevalent from the earliest times, until Dr. Hahnemann discovered this new doctrine that external manifestations were the outward expression of the internally deranged spiritual power and removal of

these external manifestations doesn't means the removal of the disease, but instead it is driven back to some more centrally located organ, to manifest itself in some more serious manner. During ancient times, it was customary to seek local applications; then if the manifestation manifested itself in the internal organs, it was thought to be caused by some evil spirit and omnipresent purification was used to expel it.

An external application is a medication that is applied to a particular place on or in the body. Most often external application means application to body surfaces such as the skin or mucous membranes to treat ailments. External application can be done using large range of classes including creams, foams, gels, lotions, drops and ointments. [2]

External application can be of various forms:

- Epicutaneous- applied directly to the skin.
- Inhalational- such as asthma medications, or
- Applied to the surface of tissues other than the skin- such as eye drops applied to the conjunctiva, or ear drops placed in the ear, or medications applied to the surface of a tooth. [3]

A medicine that has the ability to heal internally should not be used exclusively as a topical application for local symptoms of chronic miasmatic diseases.

External Application and Homoeopathy

External applications are not in the strict principle of homoeopathy; Treatment of diseases by internal medication is the specialty of homoeopathy. Diseases manifest itself by signs and symptoms, which are the sole guide of our homoeopathic method of treatment. No disease is external or local. The immaterial spirit-like vital force throws out the internal malady on the external surface. The nature of external symptoms indicates the nature of internal sickness. By removal of external affections by external application the disease is never cured. On the other hand, they may attack some vital organs of our body and as a result we lose the image of the diseases. But for accidental cases, injuries, lacerations, burns etc. we need some local cleansing and dressing of the part. [4]

Master Hahnemann gives some arguments against the external applications in his 'Organon of Medicine' (5th edition) in Sec. 196 to Sec. 203. But later on he saw the necessity of external application, while advocating the administration of medicine per mouth.

So he clearly explains, in the 6th edition of Organon of Medicine, in Sec. 284 and Sec. 285, about the use of external application. He said that curative remedy should be continued internally while the same remedy is used externally as an ointment, liniment, lotion, cerate. Dr. Hahnemann has advocated that in difficult cases of Sycosis, Thuja may be applied externally.

Tenets of Organon towards the Employment of External Applications

In his Organon of Medicine, Hahnemann describes about the external applications. *In the 5th edition of 'Organon of Medicine'* we see Hahnemann's arguments against the external applications, i.e., disadvantages of external applications from Sec. 196 to Sec: 203. [5]

Sec. 196-Sec. 197: It may be argued that in so called local diseases, local application of drug, which is curable along with internal application, may be more beneficial.

Sec. 198: Administration of suitable homoeopathic medicine only externally will remove the local symptoms but will leave less characteristic, less striking and more fluctuating internal symptoms to select our remedy which will no doubt be very difficult.

Sec. 199: Removal of local disease through surgery or corroding or drying agent before selection of a homoeopathic remedy will deprive us from the most characteristic symptoms and only uncharacteristic and inconstant symptoms are left to decide on a remedy.

Sec. 200: The persistence of the local symptoms shows the presence of internal malady. But this advantage is lost, if we remove the local disease by external applications.

Sec. 201: The presence of the local affection silences the internal disease for a time, though without being able either to cure it or to diminish it materially.

Sec. 202: When the local affections are destroyed by the external application then the dormant internal malady is roused up, which had previously co-existed with the affection.

Sec. 203: Nature tries to protect more vital organs by throwing out everything on the external surface. But external application reverses the mechanism. As a result, more important vital organs are affected giving rise to thousands of named and unnamed human chronic maladies.

In 6th edition of 'Organon of Medicine', Dr. Hahnemann wrote in favor of external application, from Sec. 284 to Sec. 285. [6]

Sec. 284: Besides the tongue, mouth and stomach, nose and respiratory organs, the whole remaining skin of the body, clothed with epidermis, is adapted to the action of medicinal solutions, especially if the inunction is connected with simultaneous internal administration.

Sec. 285: The cure of chronic diseases may be fastened by the physical application of the same medicine which given internally have proved itself curative on the back, arms, extremities by rubbing.

Sec. 282: If the fig-warts have existed for some time without treatment, they will need external application of their specific medicines as well as internal use at the same time.

External application in the light of different references

Dr. Hahnemann recommended in the *Materia Medica Pura* to apply Arnica externally in severe bruises, and until the 3rd edition of the Organon of Rational Medicine, he wrote that the externally applied remedy also has to be the internally indicated remedy for the overall condition of the disease.

However, since the fourth edition of the Organon he generally wrote that it is neither useful in acute local diseases of recent origin nor in local chronic affections to apply an external remedy.

In The Chronic Diseases, He writes pure juice pressed from the green leaves of Thuja, mixed with an equal quantity of alcohol, and in the most longstanding and difficult cases to moisten the larger fig warts every day with the mild solution, he requires the external application of their specific medicine in the sixth edition of the Organon (which was written afterwards!). With specific medicine he regularly refers to the medicine indicated according to the totality of characteristic symptoms in the sixth edition of the Organon. [7]

The Principles and Art of Cure by Roberts, H.A. mentioned that —Medicine having the power of curing internally, should not be employed exclusively as a topical application to the local symptoms of chronic miasmatic diseases. [8]

Scope of external applications in homeopathy:

Our master Dr. Hahnemann, wrote in introduction to Organon that “hitherto no one has ever taught this homoeopathic mode of cure, no one has carried it out in practice. But if the truth is only to be found in this method, as I can prove it to be, we might expect that, even though it remained unperceived for thousands of years, distinct traces of it would yet be discovered in every age”. [9]

With every passing year new additions are made in the science of homeopathy. In every new era new discoveries are added. Here are some remedies from William Boericke's Pocket manual of Homoeopathic Materia Medica, Clarke's The prescriber etc. where the authors have mentioned the use of these remedies in some local conditions. [10,11]

REMEDIES AND THEIR LOCAL USE

1. *Alstonia Scholaris*-Locally, for ulcers and rheumatic pains.
2. *Balsamum Peruvianum*- as a stimulant to raw surfaces in indolent ulcers, scabies, cracked nipples, rhagades, itch. Promotes granulation, removes fetor.
3. *Calendula Officinalis*- Locally, the aqueous calendula is used for all wounds, the greatest healing agent.
4. *Chrysarobinum*- locally in ringworm 5-10 percent in glycerin and alcohol. Equal parts.
5. *Carboneum Sulphuratum*-Locally in facial neuralgia and sciatica.
6. *Ceanothus* - Locally as hair tonic.
7. *Chloralum*- Locally, in offensive foot-sweat, bathe with one percent solution.
8. *Cineraria*- is used externally, in the treatment of cataract and corneal opacities.
9. *Cinnamonum*- Used as local disinfectant in aqueous solution.
10. *Cistus Canadensis*- Locally as a wash to arrest fetid discharges.
11. *Cochlearia Armoracia*- Locally to cure dandruff.
12. *Cuprum Sulph*- locally in 1-3 percent solution in inoperable sarcoma.
13. *Dioscorea villosa* - locally tincture is applied in whitlow in early cases it can abort the case.
14. *Erechthites* - Locally for poison oak.
15. *Eupatorium Aromaticum* - tincture, locally, in sore mouth and sore nipples.
16. *Methylum salicylicum*- an artificial gaultheria oil for rheumatism.
17. *Geranium maculatum* - Locally, in ulcers, it will destroy the pyogenic membrane.
18. *Helianthus* - externally, as vulnerary like arnica and calendula.
19. *Hydratis*- locally for cancer of lips, ulcers.
20. *Ichthyolum* - externally, it is used as an ointment, for chronic eczema and psoriasis, also acne rosacea and gouty joints. Chilblains, scabies. Rectal suppositories for senile prostate.
21. *Jequirity* - Tincture is applied locally on epithelioma, lupus, ulcers, granular lids.
22. *Mentha piperita* - Tincture can be used locally in pruritus vagina.
23. *Momordica balsamina*- Used also externally as a liniment and poultice for burns, chapped hands, etc.
24. *Oleum jecoris aselli* - Used locally in ring worm and nightly rubbing, for dwarfish, emaciated babies.
25. *Platanus occidentalis* - The tincture can be used in both acute and old neglected cases, where destruction of tissue occurred and cicatricial contraction caused marked deformity of lid, restored to practically normal conditions. Ichthyosis.
26. *Rhus Glabra*- Tincture used locally to soft, spongy gums, aphthae, pharyngitis etc.
27. *Scrophularia Nodosa*- tincture used locally for cancerous glands.
28. *Sempervivum tectorum*-tincture locally for bites of insects, stings of bees, and poisoned wounds, warts.
29. *Stellaria media* - tincture externally – rheumatism.
30. *Teucrium marum* - locally for polypi, dry powder.
31. *Thuja* - Locally, for warts and excrescences, tincture or cerate.
32. *Ustilago maydis* - tincture in Psoriasis externally also internally.
33. *Verbascum* (mullein) - mullein oil locally for earache and dry scaly condition of meatus.

CONCLUSION:

Homeopathy is based on the natural law of cure. It is essentially safe and absolutely harmless. In this mode of treatment, the patients are treated on the basis of the constitution, the cure happens at a deeper level, which strengthens the immune system making the patient stronger and healthier with a better quality of life. The homeopathic similimum which is selected in every case after a detailed case-study, brings about harmony at the constitutional level & at immunological level bringing normalcy to the patient.

As the science progresses with the new discoveries and implementations, new ways of administering the similimum can be chosen in the clinical practice. Homeopathic medicine can be given by the external route in human body. Dr. Hahnemann has elaborately written and advises in *Organon of medicine*, 6th edition, that the Homeopathic medicine can be given by the external routes. Sometimes patients are not willing to take the medicine frequently and avoid the repetition of the medicine. In such conditions, external applications can be used as they are easier to use and for preventing the omission of the remedy repetition. Importance of external application is increasing day by day and they can be effective in various clinical conditions. So, we can try and make an effort to use external application of the similimum as guided by our master and perceive its scope and limitation in our clinical practice.

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