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REVIEW ARTICLE

ROLE OF HOMOEOPATHY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ANXIETY DISORDERS

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Abstract

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Anxiety disorders are characterised by excessive fear and worry and related behavioural disturbances. Symptoms are severe enough to result in significant distress or significant impairment in functioning.

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INTRODUCTION

Anxiety disorders, the most prevalent psychiatric illnesses in the general community, are present in 15–20% of medical clinic patients. Anxiety, defined as a subjective sense of unease, dread, or foreboding, can indicate a primary psychiatric condition or can be a component of, or reaction to, a primary medical disease. The primary anxiety

disorders are classified according to their duration and course and the existence and nature of precipitants.²

TYPES OF ANXIETY DISORDERS

1. Panic Disorder - Onset in late adolescence or early adulthood.²

People with panic disorder have frequent and unexpected panic attacks. Panic attacks are sudden periods of intense fear, discomfort, or sense of losing control

even when there is no clear danger or trigger. Not everyone who experiences a panic attack will develop panic disorder.³

During a panic attack, a person may experience:

- Pounding or racing heart
- Sweating
- Trembling or tingling
- Chest pain
- Feelings of impending doom
- Feelings of being out of control

People with panic disorder often worry about when the next attack will happen and actively try to prevent future attacks by avoiding places, situations, or behaviours they associate with panic attacks. Panic attacks can occur as frequently as several times a day or as rarely as a few times a year.³

2. Generalized Anxiety Disorder

(GAD) - Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) usually involves a persistent feeling of anxiety or dread, which can interfere with daily life. It is not the same as occasionally worrying about things or experiencing anxiety due to stressful life events. People living with GAD experience frequent anxiety for months, if not years.³

Symptoms of GAD include:

- Feeling restless, wound-up, or on-edge
- Being easily fatigued
- Having difficulty concentrating

- Being irritable
- Having headaches, muscle aches, stomachaches, or unexplained pains
- Difficulty controlling feelings of worry
- Having sleep problems, such as difficulty falling or staying asleep³

3. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

(OCD): Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is an intriguing and often debilitating syndrome characterized by the presence of two distinct phenomena: obsessions and compulsions. Obsessions are intrusive, recurrent, unwanted ideas, thoughts, or impulses that are difficult to dismiss despite their disturbing nature. Compulsions are repetitive behaviours, either observable or mental, that are intended to reduce the anxiety engendered by obsessions.⁴

4. Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, Repression and Memory Impairment

Survivors of PTSD suffer from a persistent and aversive tendency to re-experience the traumatic event, as manifested by symptoms of intrusion, dissociation and hyper arousal. These symptoms can include recurrently intrusive images or dreams, hallucinatory flashbacks, intense psychological distress (caused by symbolic re-exposure), blunted affect, social withdrawal, hopelessness,

amnesia, avoidant behaviour, irritability, insomnia, hyper-vigilance and impaired concentration.

PSSD by definition involves a pathological response to memories that are so traumatic as to be at once unforgettable (hence the intrusive symptoms) and intolerable to remember (hence the dissociation).

It is currently unclear whether PTSD memory deficits derive from some (unidentified) neuropsychological sequelae of extreme stress exposure or are simply concomitant to prolonged symptoms of hyper-vigilance, emotional distress, or comorbid depression. It is clear that PTSD is associated with significant pro-active interference in memory, such that survivors are impaired in their ability to encode and to retrieve new information.

The second type of memory deficit in PTSD involves symptoms of amnesia for, and intrusion of, memories for the initial traumatic event. These symptoms represent a functional deficit in memory, such that the survivor is alternately confronted with emotionally disturbing recollections and unable to access the traumatic memory.⁴

5. Phobic Disorders - Phobias are divided into three groups: Social phobia, specific phobia and agoraphobia.^(5,6)

Specific phobia (Simple or Isolated phobia) is characterized by an excessive unreasonable fear of specific object or situations that always occurs on exposure to the feared stimulus.⁷

There are several kinds of specific phobias. Five main types of specific phobias based on focus of apprehension are acrophobia (fear of high places), zoophobia (fear of animals), astraphobia (fear of thunderstorm), hemophobia (fear on seeing blood), traumatophobia (fear of physical injury).⁸

Agoraphobia is characterized by an irrational fear of being in places away from the familiar setting of home.⁹

The term “agoraphobia” translates literally from Greek as “fear of market place” and although many patients with agoraphobia are uncomfortable in shops and markets, their true fear is being separated from a source of security.¹⁰

Tools Used For Analysing Anxiety Disorder

Hamilton Scale:¹¹

The HDRS (also known as the Ham-D) is the most widely used clinician-administered depression assessment scale. The original version contains 17 items (HDRS17) pertaining to symptoms of depression experienced over the past week.

Each item simply shows 5-point score - 0 (Absent) to 4 (severe).

Beck Anxiety Inventory Scale: ¹²

This is a widely used self-report inventory for current depression. The BDI includes both cognitive and physical symptoms of depression. The patient answers the 21 items of the BDI on a continuum of severity from 0, "I don't feel sad," to 3, "I am so sad or unhappy that I can't stand it." This instrument has adequate criterion validity and test-retest reliability and is useful for the general screening for depression in the elderly.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT AND TREATMENT ³

Psychotherapy - Psychotherapy or "talk therapy" can help people with anxiety disorders. To be effective, psychotherapy must be directed at your specific anxieties and tailored to your needs.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy - Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is an example of one type of psychotherapy that can help people with anxiety disorders. It teaches people different ways of thinking, behaving, and reacting to situations to help you feel less anxious and fearful. CBT has been well studied and is the gold standard for psychotherapy.

Exposure therapy is a CBT method that is used to treat anxiety disorders. Exposure therapy focuses on confronting the fears underlying an anxiety disorder to

help people engage in activities they have been avoiding. Exposure therapy is sometimes used along with relaxation exercises.

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Another treatment option for some anxiety disorders is acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT). ACT takes a different approach than CBT to negative thoughts. It uses strategies such as mindfulness and goal setting to reduce discomfort and anxiety. Compared to CBT, ACT is a newer form of psychotherapy treatment, so less data are available on its effectiveness.

Homoeopathy About Anxiety And Psychological Issues

Master Hahnemann described 'Vital Force' in his Organon of Medicine as follows: "In the healthy condition of man the spirit like vital force, the dynamis that animates the material body, rules with unbounded sway and retains all the parts of the organism in admirable harmonious vital operation as regards both sensations and functions, so that our indwelling, reason gifted mind can freely employ this living, healthy instrument for the higher purposes of our existence."¹³

To add a few quotes by the pillars of homoeopathy namely Dr. Kent, Dr. Close, and Dr. Roberts. **Dr. Kent in his 'Lectures on philosophy'** says "The man wills and understands; the cadaver does

not will and does not understand; then that which takes its departure is that which knows and wills. It is that which can be changed and is prior to the body. The combination of these two, the will and the understanding, constitute man; conjoined they make life and activity they manufacture the body and cause all things of the body. With the will and understanding operating in order, we have a healthy man. Then man is the will and the understanding, and the house which he lives in is his body.”¹⁴

Dr. Stuart Close in “**The Genius of Homoeopathy**” echoes these thoughts: “Life is the invisible, substantial, intelligent, individual, co-ordinating power and cause directing and controlling the forces involved in the production and activity of any organism possessing individuality.”¹⁵

“Health is that balanced condition of the living organism in which the integral, harmonious performance of the vital functions tends to the preservation of the organism and the normal development of the individual”.¹⁵

To top it all, a quote from **Dr. Roberts** “**Principles and Art of Cure by Homoeopathy**”: “No two individuals are alike. The development of the vital energy in one differs from that in another. Each one possesses a special personality and a special psychophysical construction which

is determined by the interplay of hereditary tendencies and factors of disease.”¹⁶

THERAPEUTICS:^{17,18, 19, 20}

1. Kali Phosphoricum: It is a potassium phosphate that helps calm people when overwhelmed by anxiety attacks. This is suitable for people who are easily stressed, over-sensitive, insecure, irritable, and despondent. It also helps deal with the after-effects of grief and fright. Physical ailments such as fatigue, dullness, and lack of energy that are a result of anxiety can also be treated with this bio-chemic salt.

2. Aconite Napellus: It is primary among which is to control anxiety. It also helps deal with the after-effects of anxiety such as memory weakness, restlessness, hypersensitivity, and spells of rage

A panic attack that comes on suddenly with very strong fear (even fear of death) may indicate this remedy. A state of immense anxiety may be accompanied by strong palpitations, shortness of breath, and flushing of the face.

3. Argentum Nitricum: When you're anxious, you are likely to crave for something sweet and feel very hot. Both these are cyclic symptoms of anxiety and can worsen the situation,

if not dealt with. This relieves apprehension or stage fright accompanied by agitation and a feeling of hurriedness. A physical sign corresponding to this medicine is stomach aches with belching, due to slower digestion.

4. **Arsenicum Album:** This works well for people who are worried about safety and security. If issues like health, money, and break-ins are the cause of your anxiety, this homeopathic remedy is ideal for you. It also helps deal with restlessness.

People who are deeply anxious about their health, and extremely concerned with order and security, often benefit from this remedy.

5. **Calcarea Carbonica:** Well suited for people who are scared of change and over-controlling. Such people are also often afraid of animals and of the dark and get easily confused. This remedy is usually indicated for dependable, solid people who become overwhelmed from physical illness or too much work and start to fear a breakdown. A person who needs this remedy is often chilly and sluggish, has a craving for sweets, and is easily fatigued.
6. **Pulsatilla** - Often express anxiety as insecurity and clinginess, with a need for constant support and comforting.

The person may be moody, tearful, whiny, even emotionally childish. Getting too warm or being in a stuffy room often increases anxiety. Fresh air and gentle exercise often bring relief. Anxiety around the time of hormonal changes (puberty, menstrual periods, or menopause) often is helped with Pulsatilla.

7. **Lycopodium** - Feel anxiety from mental stress and suffer from a lack of confidence. They can be self-conscious and feel intimidated by people they perceive as powerful, Taking on responsibility can cause deep anxiety and fear of failure, although the person usually does well, once started on a task. Claustrophobia, irritability, digestive upsets with gas and bloating, and a craving for sweets are often seen when this remedy is needed
8. **Phosphorus** - People who need this remedy are openhearted, imaginative, excitable, easily startled, and full of intense and vivid fears. Strong anxiety can be triggered by thinking of almost anything. Nervous and sensitive to others, they can overextend themselves with sympathy to the point of feeling exhausted and “spaced out” or even getting ill. They want a lot of company and reassurance, often

feeling better from conversation or a back-rub. Easy flushing of the face, palpitations, thirst and a strong desire for cold, refreshing foods are other indications of Phosphorus.

9. **Silicea** - Nervous, shy, and subject to bouts of temporary loss of confidence. Anxiety can be extreme when they are faced with a public appearance, interview, examination, or any new job or task. Worry and overwork can bring on headaches, difficulty concentrating, and states of exhaustion, oversensitivity, and dread. They often have low stamina

Other Remedies: Gelsemium , Ignatia Amara , Natrum muriaticum

Role of Miasm^{21, 22}

Homoeopathy is useful for various health related problems both physical and psychological. It is also used in preventive healthcare sector too. The medicinal management of psychological Problems using homoeopathy is more convenient and useful.

S. No.	Psora Sensitizing Miasm	Sycosis Miasm of Incoordination	Syphilis Degenerating Miasm
1	Anxious and fearful.	Suspicious and jealous	Destructive and melancholic
2	Philosophical	Arrogant	Close-mouthed

3	Irritability with anxiety	Irritability explodes into anger — the patient may bang the table and throw things and restlessness results.	Irritability with cruelty.
4	Sadness	Moaning	Lamenting
5	Nervous	Chaos = Syco-Syphilo-Psora	Madness = Syphilo-Syco-Psora
6	Lack of concentration and weakness of memory	Incoordination in concentration and absentmindedness	Total destruction of concentration; forgetfulness Dullness is expressed as a weakness in perception.
7	Wariness of life	Tendency to exploit everything from life	Loathing of life
8	Illusions	Delusions	Hallucinations and deliriums
9	Sadness and depression	Irascibility , rudeness and ill manners	Sentimental and closed-mouthed

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