



Case report

Case report of two siblings with multi- morbidities receiving homeopathic treatment for one year[☆]

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Homeopathy is a system of therapeutics based on the Law of Similars where 'like cures like', using highly diluted substances that cause, in healthy persons, symptoms like those to be treated. Patients are prescribed for on an individual rather than diagnosis specific basis.

This case report describes the progress of two siblings with multiple diagnoses (including ADHD), on multiple medications, receiving homeopathic treatment during one year. Multi-morbidity is a growing problem. Separate medicines are prescribed for each complaint resulting in polypharmacy, which is associated with increased incidence of adverse drug reactions.

Methods: The siblings received a variety of individualised homeopathic medicines, prescribed according to classical, clinical and isopathic methodologies. DSMIV ADHD total scores were measured every 4 months; and self-selected symptoms were measured using 'Measure Your Own Medical Outcome Profile' (MYMOP) during the 6 weekly consultations.

Results: Before treatment Sibling 1's DSMIV total T score was 90+ (highest possible), MYMOP score was 5.25. Sibling 2's DMSM total T score was 86, MYMOP score was 5.25. The siblings were on 8 medications each.

After one year Sibling 1's DSMIV total T score was 50 (normal range), MYMOP score 0.25. Sibling 2's DSMIV total T score was 53, MYMOP score 0.00. Sibling 1 was not taking any conventional medications and sibling 2 was taking one medication.

Conclusion: Treatment by a homeopath employing a variety of homeopathic methodologies and medicines over 1 year was associated with improvements in ADHD status, patient generated outcomes, parent reported pathology and reduction in conventional medication. No causal conclusions on treatment efficacy can be derived, nor the effects of homeopathic medicines separated out from the reduction in conventional medicines. More systematic research is warranted to tease out these effects, and should document treatment by homeopaths as experienced in clinical practice to explore therapeutic potential.

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1. Introduction

This case report documents the treatment by this author, (a qualified homeopath) of two siblings with multi-morbidities including Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) during 1 year. The siblings took part in a comparative consecutive case series of 30 children with diagnoses of ADHD receiving homeopathic treatment or usual care carried out between 2010 and 2013, [1]. Additional permission to publish these case reports was received from the family. One further case report from the series has previously been published [2].

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The primary objective in publishing these individual case reports additional to the case series is to document the unfolding process and pluralistic nature of homeopathic treatment as experienced in clinical practice. Historically clinical trials of homeopathy have not measured the therapy as experienced in clinical practice: not allowing flexibility of prescription or methodology, and frequently excluding the fundamental homeopathic principle of individualisation (out of 137 peer reviewed RCTs, 96 comprise non-individualised homeopathy [3]). They have instead tended to measure the efficacy of specific remedies, potencies or methodologies, not the effectiveness of the therapeutic system of homeopathy. To justify the rationale for studies measuring this, cases describing the unfolding nature of

homeopathic treatment are required. The cases benefit additionally from systematic measurement associated with the case series.

Homeopathy is “a system of therapeutics founded by Samuel Hahnemann (1755–1843), based on the Law of Similars where ‘like cures like’. Patients are given highly diluted substances that cause, in healthy persons, symptoms like those of the condition to be treated.” (<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/cgi/mesh>).

Treatment by homeopaths involves consultations and subsequent prescription of individually tailored homeopathic medicines based on information obtained during consultations. Selection of homeopathic medicines may use a variety of methods, but always with the aim of matching like with like. Homeopaths commonly apply a pluralistic approach.

Most commonly, medicines are prescribed by matching the total symptom picture displayed by a patient, including mental, general, disease and constitutional features, with that of the pathogenetic effects of a substance. This is known as *classical* prescribing.

In some instances, where pathology appears to be directly related to certain pathogens, those pathogens may be prescribed in homeopathic potency (for example tree pollens to treat hay fever). This is known as *isopathic* prescribing.

In the approach referred to as ‘*clinical*’ homeopathy, practitioners may prescribe a single standard homeopathic remedy or several medicines in combination (*a complex prescription*) for a clinical complaint or medical diagnosis [4].

The secondary objective in publishing these two cases of multi-morbidities is to provide examples of a homeopathic approach appearing to offer an appropriate, effective and safe intervention for a diversity of pathology. Multi-morbidity is an increasing issue, which conventional models struggle to manage, and alternative approaches are required. Whilst these two case reports do not constitute evidence, they may support future systematic research applications.

In conventional medicine, patients with multi-morbidities are prescribed separate medications for each complaint, receiving polypharmacy with several medications prescribed simultaneously which may result in drug interactions and undesirable side effects. Multi-morbidity and associated polypharmacy are increasingly common, and . . . “challenge the single-disease framework by which most health care, medical research, and medical education is configured” [5]. Adverse drug reactions are amongst the top five causes of death [6], with the number of medications taken associated with increased incidence [7].

The treatment of multi-morbid patients using homeopathy may be appropriate and safe and has been described as “a core competency of homeopathy” [8]. Reviews of the evidence of the safety of homeopathy indicate that homeopathic medicines may cause mild to moderate transient side-effects, but not strong or persisting side-effects [9–13]. No interactions with conventional drugs have been reported.

Comparative studies have found homeopathic treatment to be associated with similar and/or improved outcomes to conventional treatment [14]; less side effects [15,16]; and reduced drug usage [17].

2. Background

Two siblings, a girl (D.O.B 28/5/2000) and a boy (28/2/2003) fulfilling inclusion criteria to participate in a consecutive case series (a parent reported diagnosis of ADHD), were recruited in 2010 via advertisement in a local ADHD parenting support group.

Both siblings presented with additional diagnoses. Sibling 1 with dyslexia, dyspraxia, hypertonia, asthma, eczema, recurrent

urinary tract and throat infections, growth failure, allergy to dust, most animals, several foods and additives, flowers, perfumes, sunshine and cleaning products. Past complaints included kidney stones, sleep apnoea, tonsillitis, cardiac arrest, and anaphylactic shock.

Sibling 2 presented with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), dyslexia, hypertonia, recurrent ear infections, sleep apnoea, eczema, asthma, allergy to dairy products, nuts, bees and wasps, constipation, tics, chronic pneumonia, bronchitis and collapse of left lung.

2.1. History

Father has ADHD. Mother suffered from recurrent urine infections, bleeding, and low blood pressure during both pregnancies and MRSA and streptococcal infection afterwards.

2.2. Medication

Sibling 1 takes Equasim™ (for her ADHD); Clenil™ inhaler and Montelukast™ tablets (for her asthma); Loratadine™ and Piriton™ (for her allergies); Mometasone™ (to help with her breathing); sodium picosulfate™ (for her constipation); Saizen™ injections (for her growth).

Sibling 2 takes Equasim™ (for his ADHD); Ventolin™ and Seritide™ inhaler and Montelukast™ tablets (for his asthma); Cetirizine™ and Piriton™ (for his allergies); Avamys™ (for his breathing); Lactulose™ (for his constipation); and is currently on a six week course of antibiotics (for his chronic pneumonia).

2.3. Homeopathic consultation

Mother, father and the two siblings attended an initial consultation of 2 h during which a case history of each sibling was taken. Both children were wheezy and struggled to climb the stairs to the consultation room.

2.3.1. Sibling 1

Sibling 1 had been ill since birth, receiving many courses of antibiotics. She never slept, cried constantly, had a persistent green stools and frequent urinary tract infections. Aged 1½ she had recurrent tonsillitis. Aged 2 she developed eczema, asthma, allergies and kidney stones. Aged 3 her nose was cauterised and adenoids removed during which she suffered cardiac arrest. She had little speech until the age of 6.

She has been on a growth hormone for the last year and has grown 11 cm. She has recurrent bruising, and pains in the joints, is constantly tired and does not run as she gets out of breath. Despite these ailments mother describes her as a happy child, eager to please, considerate, who likes to help others. She is extremely forgetful and repetitive, and struggles to sleep until late at night.

She had 9 months off school aged 5 due to her allergies. Now she says that she enjoys school. She forgets things, writes backwards and wears glasses for reading.

She has obsessions: washing her hands, touching taps equally, drinking from certain cups, doesn't like odd numbers, has to have cuddly toys in a particular arrangement, and wet paper towels on her feet at night. These rituals mean she cannot sleep away from home.

2.3.2. Sibling 2

Sibling 2 followed a similar health trajectory to sibling 1. His heart stopped at birth, he remained ‘blue’ for 9 days, and did not cry. He also suffered from tummy pains and vomitted if given milk. He ‘screamed’ unless ‘physically attached’ and still does.

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