

Efficacy Of Homeopathic Medicines As An Add On Therapy InReducing The Intensity Of Autistic Features In Children Suffering From Autism Spectrum Disorder; A Case Series

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Abstract

Purpose/ Background:

Background:

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder of behavior that presents in childhood. It is a clinically heterogeneous disorder of behavior, characterized by two features - (1) impairment in social communication and interaction and (2) repetitive patterns of behavior. The diagnosis is essentially clinical and is based primarily on history-taking and observation of the child over a period. There are several standardized screening tools and scales available to help make a diagnosis. Children with autism often present with speech delay and this has to be distinguished from other conditions. ASD is often associated with comorbid conditions which have to be identified to tailor the treatment program for each child. It is important that the parents or caretakers of the child are involved in the process of assessment and diagnosis and that their misconceptions and fears are addressed.

Methods:

Simple randomized sampling with 30 cases in which patients were enrolled till the target was achieved. The patients were selected on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Patients were considered on the basis of clinical presentation. All cases were taken as per the case record format prepared for the study. Prescription of each case was based on the symptoms similarity. Integrated approach was applied including Speech therapist, Occupational t therapist and Psychiatrist. The scale was utilized under the guidance of Psychiatrist. Outcome was assessed to measure the reduction in the frequency & intensity of the symptoms and signs of Autism spectrum disorder.

Results:

All 30 cases were studied after administration of homoeopathic remedy as an add on Out of 30 cases, 28 cases improved with homoeopathic medicines and 2 cases were not improved.

Conclusion:

In this study it is found that homoeopathic constitutional remedies are effective in the treatment of Autism spectrum disorders along with integrated approach.

Keywords : Autism clinical features, autism diagnosis, autism screening, autism spectrum disorder, case series.

Introduction:

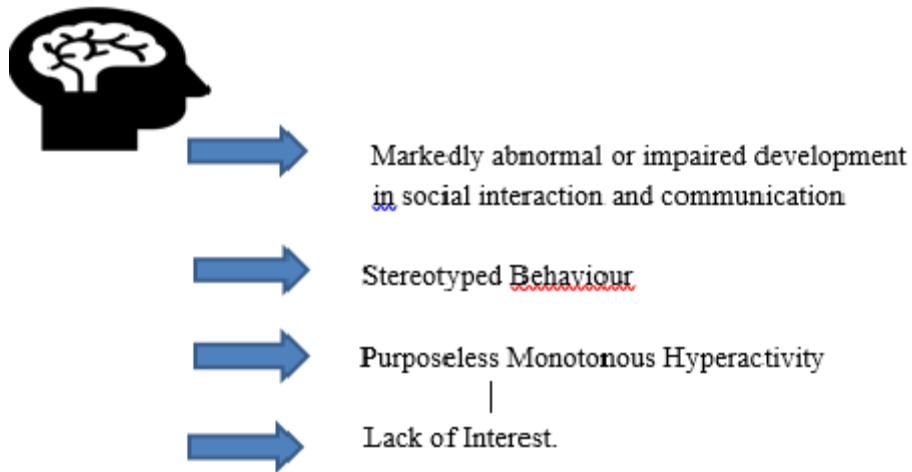
Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) are neurodevelopmental disorders characterized By Impaired Social interactions, deficits in verbal and non-verbal communication and Repetitive behavior or unusual or

severely limited interests. The disorder also includes limited and repetitive patterns of behavior. The term "spectrum" in autism spectrum disorder refers to the wide range of symptoms and severity. Childhood autism is severe and a serious disorder. Homoeopathy has a significant role in the treatment of Autism spectrum disorders. Homoeopathic medicines work by optimizing the overactive immune system. Homoeopathic medicines provide a stimulus to the body like that of the trigger or allergen leading to the gradual desensitization of the immune system. Homoeopathic treatment is based on the principle of "Similia Similibus Curenture". There are a lot many constitutional medicines in homoeopathy which help in the treatment Autism spectrum disorders. Along with integrated approach which includes Speech therapy, Occupational therapy, Physiotherapy and Family Counseling.

Literature Review

Autism is not a single disorder, but a spectrum of closely related disorders. Autism is an intense developmental disability characterized by

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AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

“Auto”- Self

“Autism” – Morbid Self -Admiration And Withdrawal Within Self

“Spectrum”- wide variation in the type and severity of

symptoms

i.e; Children are locked within themselves

The term Autism was changed to Autism Spectrum Disorder in 2013 by the American Psychiatric Association. ASD is now an umbrella term that covers the following conditions:

- Autistic disorder
- Pervasive developmental disorder – not otherwise specified
- Asperger syndrome

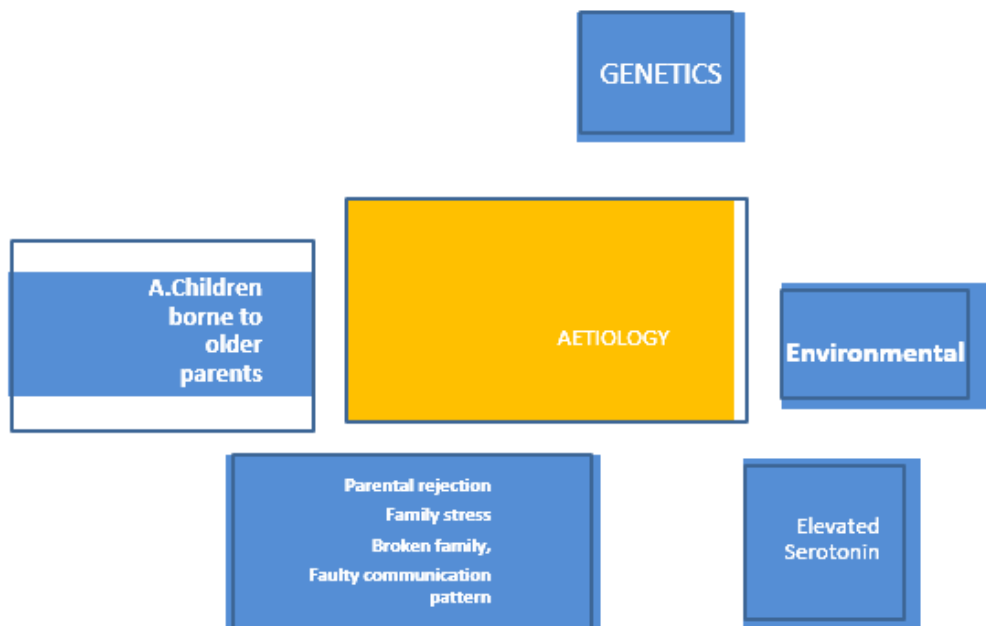
Incidence and Prevalence:

The prevalence of autism spectrum disorders (ASD) is high in Indian children.

Prevalence rate of 0.9/1000 of Northwest India. The highest prevalence rate was observed in the rural area. Where as, males are more prone to have ASD as compare to females.

AETIOPATHOGENSIS :

Autism spectrum disorder has no single known cause. Given the complexity of the disorder, and the fact that symptoms and severity vary, there are probably many causes. Both genetics and environment may play a role.



A. Genetics:-

Several different genes appear to be involved i autismspectrum disorder. For some children ,autism spectrum disorder can be associated with a genetic disorder, such as Rett syndrome or fragile X syndrome. For other children, genetic changes (mutations) may increase the risk of autismspectrum disorder. Still other genes may affect brain development or the way that brain cells communicate, or they may determine the severity of symptoms. Some geneticmutations seem to be inherited, while others occur spontaneously. But there is no conclusive evidence regarding the genes involved in ASD

in Indian population, so more definitive studies are warranted.

B. Environmental factors:-

Researchers are currently exploring whether factors such as viral infections, medications or complications during pregnancy, or air pollutants play a role in triggering autism spectrum disorder.

C. Biochemical factors : Such as an elevated Serotonin

D. Factors such as parental rejection, family stress, broken family, faulty communication pattern etc.

E. Medical conditions such as encephalitis, meningitis, congenital rubella, neurological abnormalities and chromosomal abnormalities.

F. Children borne to older parents

COMMAN QUESTIONS TO ANSWER AND TO BE KNOW

1. ARE CHILDHOOD VACCINES RESPONSIBLE FOR AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS?

Available epidemiological data show that there is no evidence of a link between measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine and autism spectrum disorders. Previous studies suggesting a causal link were found to be seriously flawed. There is also no evidence to suggest that any other childhood vaccine may increase the risk of autism spectrum disorders. In addition, evidence reviews commissioned by WHO concluded that there was no association between the use of vaccine preservatives such as thiomersal and autism spectrum disorder.

2. WHETHER AUTISM IS CURABLE? WHAT IS THE PROGNOSIS OF AUTISTIC CHILD?

The future of an autistic child depends upon many things.

3. What Is The Degree Of Mental Retardation Along With Autism?

Autistic children with normal intellectual functioning may be able to adjust with society far better than Children with below average IQ.

4. How Early The Disorder Is Diagnosed And What Are The Therapeutic Interventions Received By The Child?

If the disorder is diagnosed early and child is given therapies like occupational therapy with Sensory Integration, speech therapy, water therapy, behavior modification programme etc., the disease can be Controlled at a very early stage and the future of the child can be made better.

d. Whether proper diet is followed by the patient

e. How early the homoeopathic medication has been started.

5. Can Children With Autism Be Educated? And How Is This Done?

Yes. Autistic children can be educated using advanced technique like applied behaviour analysis . Parental guidance and counseling, speech therapy, sensory integration therapy, etc are essential.

6. Whether autistic child can be transferred to a mainstream school after few years of Special schooling?

Currently as I'm working with Dr Praful Barvalia sir, according to his experience and the patients I see after intensive Holistic Management we have been able to integrate number of high functioning children in Slow Learner Section and later in Mainstream School.

7. Whether There Are Any Dietary Restrictions Or Special Diet For Autistic Children?

All preservatives and artificial flavored products should be avoided. Some experts also suggest GFCF diet i.e. (Gluten free & Casein free diet)

8. What is Homoeopathy?

Homoeopathy is 200 years old system of medicine discovered by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann a German Physician and is based on Natural Holistic Form of medicine based on laws nature. Homeopathy takes consideration of the person as a whole and the prescription is based on Individual features. So each child though having same diagnosis of Autism will need individual Homeopathic Medicine. And that is how it helps in holistic way. Improvement is seen at both the levels physical as well as mental level.

9. What Role Can Homoeopathy Play In The Management Of Autism?

Homoeopathic medicines do not act merely on any one particular organ an individual but it has much morr deeper and central action on psycho neuro endocrinological and psycho immunological axis.

Thus it plays distinct role in reducing or eliminating autistic features.

A. Homoeopathy works well to correct accentuated state of sensitivity bringing about good moderation. In Autism we come across impaired sensory defenses giving rise to severe disturbances of sensitivity. Some children show marked degree of hyper sensitivity to noise, light, touch etc. Some children show intense inclination for hugging and touching things, while others would be extremely averse to hugging and cuddling. **There is marked impairment in processing of kinesthetic and proprioceptive sensation. Homoeopathic Materia Medica gives ample evidence of such symptomatology. When skillfully utilized, yields marvelous results.**

B. Autistic child quite often suffers from acute fears like fear of dark, crowd, gravitational fears (fear of falling down) etc. **Homoeopathic medicine helps to remove these fears.**

C. Homeopathic medicine **helps to improve fine motor skills as well as perceptual difficulties.**

D. Behavior modification through homoeopathic medicine is an age old, well documented function of homoeopath. These tiny pills work wonderfully to improve hyperactivity, tamper tantrums, self injurious behaviour or destructive behaviour. It promotes the growth gradient and hence facilitates the process of development. Thus it has **positive effect even in communication and language.**

E. Act as **immunomodulators and promote the general RESISTANCE POWER of the system.**

F. Help in managing underlying neurological, genetic, metabolic problems.

10. Do Homoeopathic medicines have any adverse or depressing neuro-physiological side effects.?

A carefully selected Homoeopathic medicine brings about a qualitative change at a wide range of the symptoms in children with Autism.

- a. It essentially helps to a great extent in behavior modification to reduce child's hyperactivity/irritability, Violence etc.
- b. It thus prepares the child to receive other necessary experience for learning like sensory integration, special education etc. homoeopathy provides good support and makes the much important job of educators and therapists easier in taking the child further up on the learning curve.
- c. Hyperactive children when they grow, develop number of perceptual difficulties. These defects obstruct the process of learning bringing about varieties of learning disabilities/difficulties. Homoeopathic medicines help to correct these errors.
- d. Thus a harmonious coordination in a team of doctors, psychologist, educators, therapists and parent is a must in dealing with the spectrum of AUTISM in its entire range and depth. Each discipline has its own distinct role to play. Synergy results in the best results.
- e. Since Autism has multiple dimensions, we can't expect medicines to give any magical results but when utilized scientifically it has great potential.
- f. Homoeopathic physician's approach is holistic. Hence he can develop better grasp over various dimensions of the disorder. Thus he can prove good coordinator in the delivery of multidisciplinary, integrated care.

11. What Improvement Can I Expect In My Child After Receiving Homoeopathic Treatment?

Homoeopathic medicines based on rational principles and have a deep impact on the system.

- When a child starts responding to homoeopathic medications, improvement is first seen at a general level. Child starts getting calmer, improvement is seen in sleep, appetite & general health. Next is the improvement in behaviour reduction is seen in hyperactivity, restlessness, tantrums, violence etc.
- Improvement in eye contact and ability to respond
- Further we see change in communication skills. He starts indicating and subsequently starts developing ability to speak words. Echolalia improves too. This may take long time.
- Obsessive behaviour takes a long time to improve.
- Child starts showing improved general resistance. This is because homoeopathic medicines act as immunomodulators.

12. What Factors Determine The Rate Of Improvement?

In most cases, order of improvement seen is as discussed earlier.

Best results are seen when we start the treatment at the earliest i.e. as soon as possible when the symptoms or signs are observed. Improvement also depends upon the degree of Autism i.e. mild/moderate/ severe (known through evaluation scales e.g CARS) Other associated conditions like epilepsy, genetic disorders etc also influence the outcome.

13. Can The Child Be Given Homoeopathic Medication If He Is Already Under Allopathic Medication?

It is desirable to gradually taper off allopathic medicines when we put an autistic child on homoeopathic treatment.

14. Can other therapies be given to child receiving homoeopathic treatment?

Homoeopathy works in perfect synergy with other essential therapies like **sensory integration homoeopathic education, auditory integration therapy** etc. Rational and judicious coordination of homeopathic treatment along with **sensory integration therapy** makes tremendous difference to the management of children with Autism. Senior therapists and educators have often remarked that they have found Children receiving Homoeopathic medicines to be **much calmer and easier to handle**. They were much more receptive to therapy & educational inputs.

Investigations:

Diagnosing autism spectrum disorder (ASD) can be difficult because there is no medical test, like a blood test, to diagnose the disorder. Doctors look at the child's developmental history and behavior to make a diagnosis. ASD can sometimes be detected at 18 months or younger.

Materials And Methods

Study design – Case Series Study

Study Settings – College opd

Camps and Private opd

Cases from multiple disability centre

Duration of study: > 18 months

Sample size – Total 30 numbers of cases

Inclusion criteria –

- Children fulfilling the case definition
- Children of both the sexes
- Individuals or their parents giving consent for the study

Exclusion criteria –

- Individuals or their parents not giving consent for the study
- Incomplete evaluation
- Hearing impairment
- Unavailable caregiver
- Known cerebral palsy
- Other Pervasive developmental disorders
- Children suffering from life threatening disease and those who need emergency medical intervention or requires continuous allopathic medications.

Methods and data collection relevant to objective –

Patient and patient's attendant (Parents)

Data Collection Tools:

- History Taking

- Case Record Format
- Material Medica And Repertory.

Methods of measurement – Case record format, Homoeopathic software like RADAR.

Data management and analysis procedure –

Data management and analysis procedure:- Patients will be selected on the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria, clinical presentation and history. The data will be represented in the Standardized Case Record Format prepared for the topic. Analysis and evaluation of the symptoms, constructing the totality of symptoms and Repertorization will be done for each case, with reference from Homoeopathic Materia Medica, Repertory and Therapeutics as per requirement. The potency selection and repetition of the doses will be prescribed according to the demand of the case. Treatment for each case will be on the basis of individualization. Follow-up's would be watched and analyzed in each case. Medicines will not be repeated as long as the improvement in the symptoms of the patient continues. When the improvement stops, same medicine will be repeated with same or higher potency. During follow up, changes in symptoms of each case will be noted. Changes in clinical findings and clinical presentations are parameters for assessing cases as recovered, improved and not improve The result will be verified by the use of a specialized design test for the study or can be verified with the standard test as per the need of the study. Plan for statistical analysis The result will be verified by the use of a specialized design test for the study or can be verified with the standard test/ Questionnaire as per the need of the study.

Ethical issues, if any – Ethical clearance has been obtained from the ethical committee of the institute.

Observations And Results

Observation no. 1 –

Sr. No	Male	Female
1	24	6

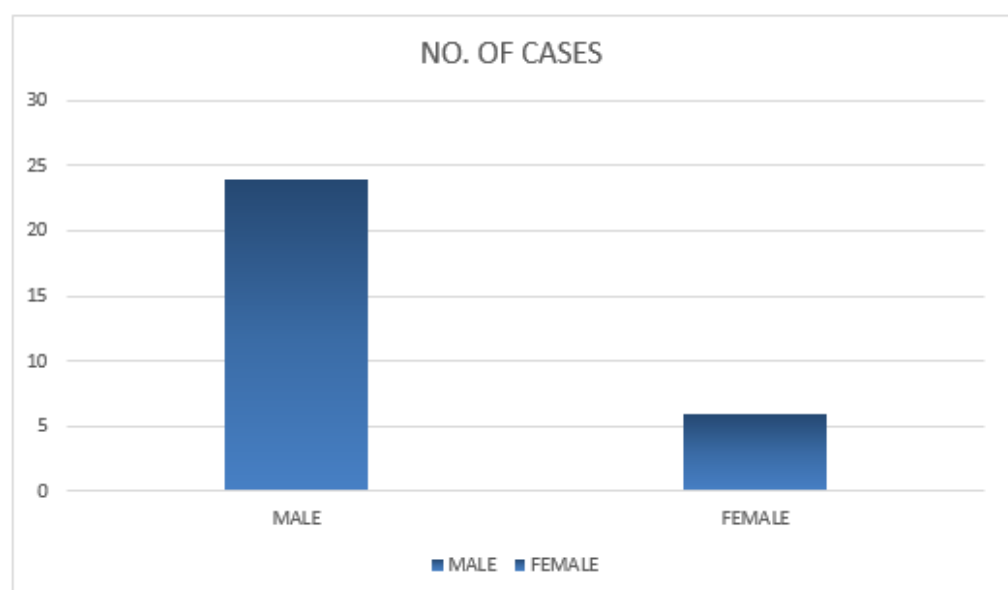


Figure No.1: Bar Diagram: Representing distribution according to sex

Observation no 2 –

Distribution according to the age groups

Table no 2 –

	Age group	No of patients
1	3– 8 years	13
2	8– 12 years	08
3	12 – 15 years	06

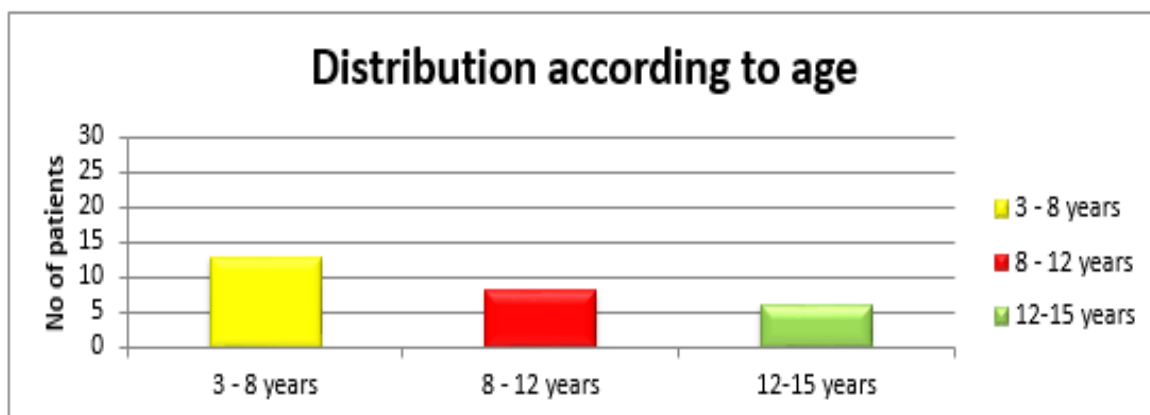


Figure No. 2: Bar Diagram: Representing distribution according to age group

Observation no 3 –

Distribution of cases according to the medicine used in ASD cases

Table no 3 -

Sr. No	Name of medicine	No of patients
1	Hyoscyamus Nigera	7
2	Calcarea Phosphorica	6
3	Carcinosin	6
4	Arsenicum Album	1
5	Lycopodium	1
6	Tarentula Hispania	3
7	Elaps	1
8	Lachesis	1
9	Arsenic Album	1
10	Pulsatilla	2

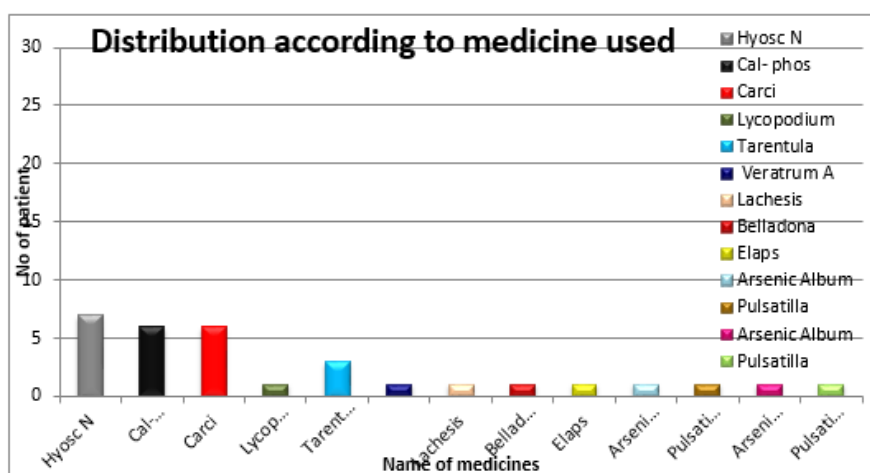


Figure 3: Representing medicines used as per patients

Observation no 4 –

Distribution of cases according to the response of patient after homoeopathic treatment

Table no. 4-

Response after treatment	Improved	Improving
No of patient	2	28

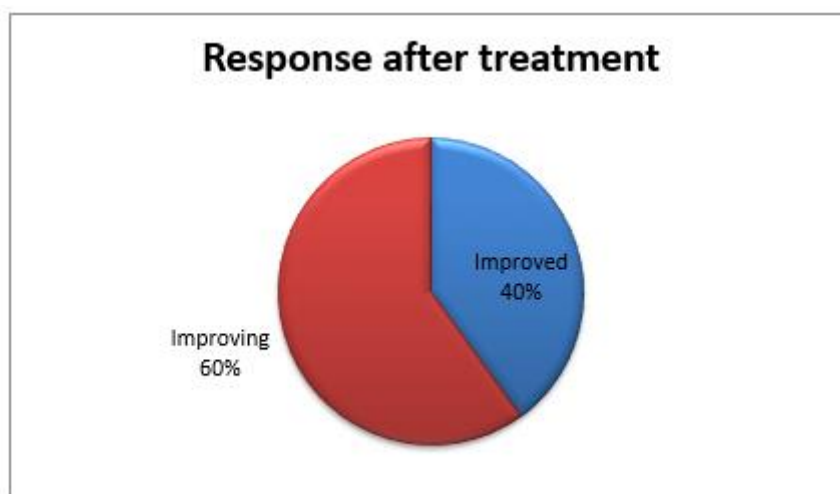


Figure No. 4: Pie Diagram: Representing distribution according to response after treatment

Conclusion:

The result of this study has shown that the “Homoeopathic constitutional medicines are effective in reducing the symptoms of ASD in children. In the present study the aim of using homoeopathic constitutional medicines as the treatment of ASD cases was achieved as, results were found to be of a good success rate. Parents found improvement in the ability of their children to complete the given task in their day-to-day activities. Hence quality life of both parents and children are being improved. Considering the total data, Out of 30 cases, 28 cases (93.33%) showing improvement, cases (2.33%) was not improved due to intermittent therapies.

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