

## Homoeopathic medication improves the QoL in common health problems inpatients of geriatric age group

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### Abstract

**Introduction:** Common health problems in geriatric age group adversely affect their Quality of life. This study was carried out with the objective to identify the commonest geriatric problems and the indicated Homoeopathic remedies. **Material and Methods:** Thirty cases of geriatric problems were selected based the questionnaire in four domains. I.e. physical, psychological, social, environmental. The improvement in Quality of Life (QoL), using WHO QoL-BREF scale was studied before and after the treatment. **Result:** Significant improvement in QoL after treatment was observed and verified using paired t test. Common health problems encountered in old age study group were generalized weakness<sup>11</sup>, joint pain<sup>24</sup>, constipation<sup>13</sup>, breathlessness, hypertension<sup>15</sup>. Commonly indicated Homoeopathic remedies were, Pulsatilla<sup>8</sup>, Nux Vomica<sup>3</sup>, Arsenicum album<sup>3</sup> etc. **Conclusion:** The study has explored the potential of using Homoeopathic medicines in improving the quality of life in common health problems of geriatric age group.

**Key words:** Homoeopathy, QoL, Geriatric, WHO QoL-BREF scale

### Introduction-

Ageing can be defined as a progressive accumulation through life of random molecular defects that build up within tissues and cells. Eventually, despite multiple repair and maintenance mechanisms this result in age related functional impairment of tissues and organs. <sup>[1]</sup> This leads to multiple health issues in Geriatric age leading to deterioration of their quality of life. Geriatric age group comprise of the people above the 65 years of age <sup>[2]</sup> According to the population census 2011 there are nearly 104 million elderly persons aged 65 and above in India. The most common disability among aged persons was locomotory disability and visual disability as per census 2011. The sample survey conducted by National Sample Survey office in 2004 reveals that 65% of the aged persons had to depend on others for their day today maintenance. Absence of sufficient income to support

themselves for health care facilities further adds to their problem. Use of allied medicines may prove to be detrimental to health of this vulnerable population. According to a scientific study conducted by National institute of health concluded that homeopathic treatment is perceived as a low-risk therapy with fewer side effects than conventional drugs. And this is benefit of homeopathic treatment for elders.<sup>[3]</sup> According to a research conducted by National center for Biotechnology information (NCBI) concluded that homeopathic therapy has significantly lower cost than conventional drugs, while they are equally effective in the end result.<sup>[4]</sup>

Primary objective of the study was to find out commonest geriatric problems. The secondary objective was to find out the most effective homoeopathic remedies for geriatric problems that improve the QoL of the participants. The study was conducted at Motiwala Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital, Nashik.

Homoeopathy is considered as safest mode of treatment. Homoeopathic medicines are comparatively affordable and easy to administer. ; hence this study is a small attempt to find out if homoeopathic medicines can be effective alternative to improve quality of life of peoples of geriatric age group.

**Material and Methods:** A prospective observational study was carried out between December, 2017 and June, 2018 in out-patient department of Motiwala Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital, Nashik. Ethical clearance was obtained from the institutional ethics committee. Patients recruited were assessed as per WHO QOL-BREF scale and Homoeopathic medicines were prescribed based on law of similia.

Inclusion Criteria- 1. Individuals aged 65 years or more 2. Suffering from health problems compromising QoL

Exclusion Criteria- Patients suffering from malignancy, HIV, mentally challenged people and immune-compromised cases were excluded for the study.

## Participants-

A total number of 30 patients from outpatient department of Motiwala Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital suffering from age related health problems were recruited for the study. Informed consent was obtained. Specific case record format was filled for diagnosing the health problems. WHO QoL-BREF scale questionnaire was filled by the patient at the time of case taking. The questionnaire comprises of questions pertaining to quality of life in physical, psychological, social and environment domains. Improvement of QoL was calculated based on comparison of scores at the time of

recruitment and at the end of the study period.

**Treatment:** each individual patient was prescribed a single Homoeopathic medicine based on the totality of symptoms and repertorisation. Patients were called for follow-up at an interval of one month or early if required. Based on the improvement in presenting totality at each follow-up the indicated remedy was repeated.

**Outcome measures:** World Health Organization QoL-BREF scale, questionnaire with twenty six questions covering physical, psychological, social and environment was filled by the patients at the beginning of treatment and at the end of study period. The patients improvement is assessed by the scores arrived as per the procedure laid down in the instrument.

**Observation and Result:**

1. Mean QoL score was 31.61 before treatment and 34.42 after treatment it was .difference in mean was compared using paired t test calculated t value was 78.74 were as table t value was 2.04 thus rejecting nulls hypothesis .
2. 30 patients recruited were in the age of 65 to 83. The common health problems encountered were Joint pains (80%), Hypertension (50%), constipation (43.33%) generalized weakness (36.66%).

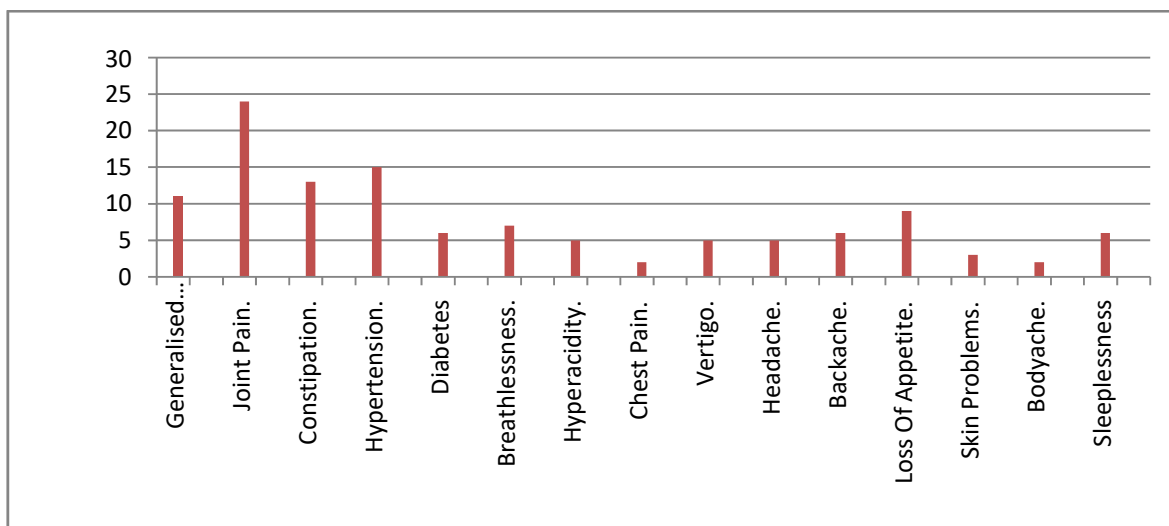


Fig.1 Common Health Problems in Geriatric Age in 30 Patients

3. The commonly indicated homoeopathic remedies were Pulsatilla (27%), Nux Vomica ,Arsenic album (10%) ,Lachesis,Sulphur,Lycopodium,Mercurius, Nat Mur (7%) .

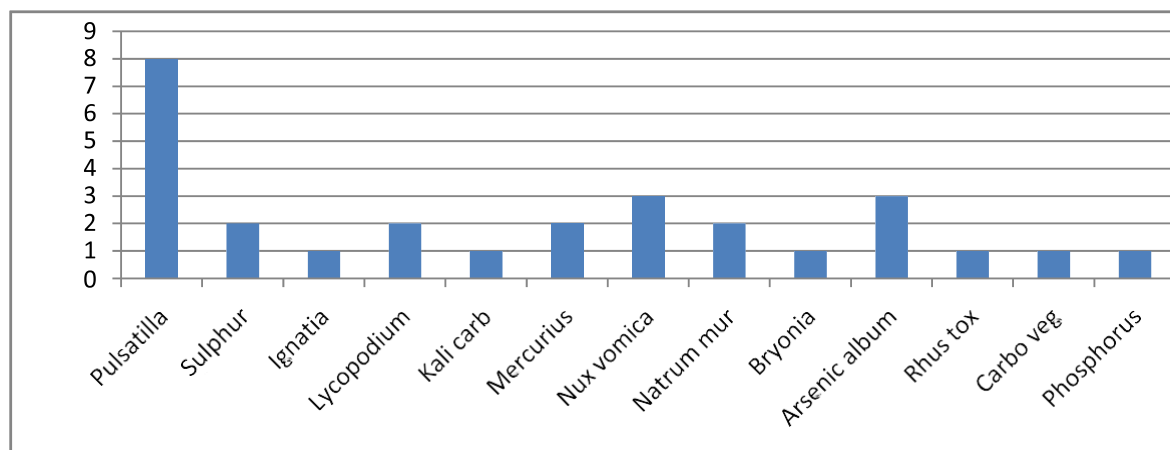


Fig.2 Medicine used in 30 Geriatric patients

## Discussion:

Random molecular defects that build up within tissues and cells as a result of ageing give rise to functional impairment of tissues and organs. These ageing changes lead to multiple health issues in Geriatric age deteriorating their quality of life. This study was done to explore the usefulness of Homoeopathic medicine in management of common geriatric health problems to improve the QoL.

To assess the improvement World Health Organization QoL-BREF scale was applied in which the questions were according to four domains. i.e. physical, psychological, social, environment. Questionnaire was filled before prescription (pre-study) and after sixth follow up (Post-study). The scores in four domains were- pre-study score in physical domain is- 18.17 and post-study score- 18.13, in Psychological domain the pre-study score- 18.20 and post-study score- 22.65, in social domain pre-study score- 52.79 and post-study score- 59.27, in environment domain, the pre-study score- 15.96 and post-study score- 17.68.[Table 1]

The instrument applied enabled the study to measure the improvement in QoL in physical, Psychological, Social and Environment domains. Homoeopathic medicines affected primarily in Psychological domain as can be seen in the therapeutic indications under the remedy in the Homoeopathic Materia Medica. Pulsatilla, Arsenicum album, Nux Vomica which were prescribed

prominently corroborates to the mental generals of these Homoeopathic medicines.

Consequent to improvement in Psychological domain, the compatibility of the patients improved in the Social and environment domains. There was a sense of wellbeing in the social environment expressed by the participants. Contrary to improvement in Psychological, social and environment domains, there was deterioration in the scores of physical domain that may probably owing to the ageing which is an irreversible phenomenon. In spite of deterioration in the physical domain evident from the scores, the Homoeopathic remedies prescribed seems to have helped the geriatric group of participants in coping up of their lives pertaining to the others domains. This sense of well being and consequent improvement in QoL corroborates to the holistic approach of Homoeopathy.

**Conclusion-** The study has explored the potential of Homoeopathic medicines in improving the quality of life in common health problems of geriatric age group. Homoeopathic medicines improve quality of life in psychological domain followed by improvement in quality of life in social and environmental domains. The defects of ageing in Physical domain can effectively be overcome by homoeopathic medicines by strengthening the psychological domain.

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