



Case Report

A case of eczema treated with homoeopathic medicine

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ABSTRACT

Eczema is a superficial inflammation of the skin. In conventional medicine, it is treated with emollients and topical steroids. We present the case of a 44-year-old male patient with eczema over the face, neck, chest and hands, who was treated with the homoeopathic medicines sulphur and graphites without the aid of emollients and steroids. It is clearly apparent from this evidence-based case report that homoeopathy has a positive role in the treatment of eczema. This finding can provide the basis for conducting large-scale studies with different study designs regarding the treatment of eczema with homoeopathy.

Keywords: Eczema, Graphites, Homoeopathy, Sulphur

INTRODUCTION

Eczema is a superficial inflammation of the skin characterized by redness, itching, oedema, oozing, crusting, scaling, vesicles and occasional lichenification.^[1-3] Eczema is synonymously used with dermatitis, but it is often used to refer to atopic dermatitis, which is the most common type of dermatitis.^[3] Eczema is diagnosed clinically on the basis of the patient's presenting symptoms. The management of eczema primarily comprises avoiding contact with irritants and regular use of emollients. In conventional medicine, topical steroids are used, but relapses are very common.^[4] According to homoeopathic principles, suppressed eruptions always lead to deeper diseases; therefore, such eruptions should be treated with homoeopathic individualized medicine.^[5,6] There are many medicines in the homoeopathic repertory^[7,8] and materia medica^[9] for the treatment of eczema; the prescription of a remedy is based primarily on the presenting complaints of the patient.

Here, we present a case of eczema that was treated with the homoeopathic medicines sulphur and graphites that were selected therapeutically.

CASE REPORT

A 44-year-old male patient reported to the OPD of the Homoeopathic unit on 30 March, 2016 with the complaints of eczematous lesions over the face, neck, chest and hands [Figures 1-4]. The patient first developed these lesions 3 years prior. At present, the patient complained of itching with sticky watery discharge from the lesions. The itching was aggravated by warmth and hot weather. He is an office worker and has no significant history of chemical exposure. He was using an allopathic ointment for 2½ years with relapses occurring, whenever he stopped using the ointment. He was also a chronic alcoholic and had been taking alcohol daily from 15 years (30–60 ml/day).

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Figure 1: Pre-treatment eczema over the face (front view).



Figure 3: Pre-treatment eczema over dorsum of the right hand.



Figure 2: Pre-treatment eczema over the face and neck (lateral view).



Figure 4: Pre-treatment eczema over dorsum of the left hand.

Sulphur was selected as the patient had itching which was aggravated by warmth and hot weather. A history of suppression (i.e. use of allopathic ointment) and a history of chronic alcoholism was also present. On the basis of the above complaints and sulphur's affinity for diseases of the skin, one dose of sulphur 200C was administered as per the susceptibility of the patient, followed by graphites 30C, which is complementary to sulphur and has watery sticky discharge. Graphites 30C were administered every alternate day for 2 weeks.^[9,10]

The patient was instructed not to use any other treatment for the same condition and to moisturize with coconut oil in case of dryness.

Follow-up

The patient first followed up on 13 April, 2016, with improvement in itching and discharge. Graphites 30C was repeated again every alternate day.

The patient then returned on 9 May, 2016 with no further improvement, so one dose of sulphur 200C was repeated followed by graphites 30°C every alternate day for 3 weeks. He came back on 15 June, 2016 with relief in itching, discharge and eczematous lesions. The patient had not consumed alcohol for the past few days. Based on this report, placebo was administered.

The patient was improving thereafter until 1 September, 2016, when progress came to a standstill and graphites 30C was again repeated once daily for 5 days followed by placebo.

The patient reported on 20 September, 2016, with relief in all the complaints and hence was given placebo.

He was followed up till 14 February, 2017. Placebo was continued as the patient was improving steadily. At the last follow-up, the patient had clear and healthy skin and was feeling much better [Figures 5-8]. He had stopped consuming alcohol after the treatment had started.



Figure 5: Post-treatment photograph of the face (front view).



Figure 7: Post-treatment photograph of dorsum of the right hand.



Figure 6: Post-treatment photograph of the face and neck (lateral view).



Figure 8: Post-treatment photograph of dorsum of the left hand.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This case report shows the efficacy of homoeopathic medicines in the case of eczema. No local application was used. On the basis of the patient's presenting symptoms and on referring to the *Materia Medica*,^[9] sulphur and graphites were selected, as both follow each other well.^[9] Administration of both remedies in the correct order yielded marked improvement in the follow-up. Sulphur and graphites are both well known for their action on the skin and hence showed their effect on eczema. However, this is a single case report and further larger studies with different study designs and large sample sizes are required for determining the efficacy of homoeopathic treatment in cases of eczema.

Declaration of patient consent

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent.

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Conflict of interest

There are no conflict of interest.

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