

HOMOEOPATHY AS A COST-EFFECTIVE HEALTHCARE SYSTEM FOR MANAGING CHRONIC DISEASES IN INDIA.

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Abstract:

India is facing major rapid increase of communicable disease such as dengue, malaria, typhoid and other infectious disease, and noncommunicable disease such as hypertension, diabetes, asthma, autoimmune disease, metabolic hormonal disorders. Due to this condition repeated hospital visits, consultations, investigations and drug usage become costly. Homoeopathic system of medicine give cost effective treatment in such type of disease with rapid gentle cure. It reduces all cost of hospitals and other expenditure. This retrospective observation study of various data across India examines the homoeopathic system of medicine is cost effective healthcare system in managing of chronic disease. Through its individualistic homoeopathic treatment patient receives cost effective treatment with good results. This reduces major expenditure of treatment for developing Vikshit Bharat.

Introduction:

India's aspiration to become a developed nation (vikshit bharat) is closed linked to the health of its population. Chronic disease such as diabetes, hypertension, arthritis, allergies, skin disease and other autoimmune diseases are increasing rapidly and now account for a major share of healthcare expenditure. These condition demands continuous treatment, leading to prolong drug use, repeated consultation and financial strain on families.

Despite of having advancement in medical technology, rising healthcare costs and unequal access continue to challenge the goal universal health coverage. Therefore, complementary healthcare models that are both effective and economically sustainable are needed. Homoeopathic recognized as part of AYUSH system in India. It offers the holistic, individualized and low-cost approach to health care. It treats patient as whole, mentally and physically. It dominates the disease profile of the 21st century.

Various observation data of government report and published comparative data

1. Outcome and costs of homoeopathic and conventional treatment strategies: a comparative cohort study in patients with chronic disorders

The analyses of 493 patients (315 adults, 178 children) indicated greater improvement in patients' assessments after homoeopathic versus conventional treatment (adults: homeopathy from 5.7 to 3.2; conventional, 5.9-4.4; $p=0.002$; children from 5.1 to 2.6 and from 4.5 to 3.2). Physician assessments were also more favourable for children who had received homoeopathic treatment (4.6-2.0 and 3.9-2.7; $p<0.001$). Overall costs showed no significant differences between both treatment groups (adults, 2155 versus 2013, $p=0.856$; children, 1471 versus 786, $p=0.137$).⁽¹⁾

2. Cost Effectiveness And Efficacy Of Homeopathy In Primary Health Care

1.25 million Patients visited the homeopathic clinics and their morbidity profile included respiratory diseases gastrointestinal diseases skin diseases female diseases viral diseases and injuries and other miscellaneous diseases. The average annual patient turnover in an allopathic clinic was 27508 patients and 24943 patients in a homeopathic clinic respectively. The expenditure incurred per patient per visit in allopathic clinic was Rupee 76.90 and Rupee 15.43 in Homeopathic clinic respectively. The survey revealed that majority of patients attending these clinics were fully satisfied and the staff at these clinics were very cordial, cooperative and confident. There were instances of mutual referral of patients from allopathic clinic to homeopathic clinic and vice-versa. Both the studies established beyond doubt that homeopathy is quite popular, very cost effective and can be widely used at primary health care level for the common day to day diseases. ⁽²⁾

Table No- 1: Total Number of Patients

Clinics	Number of Clinics	Number of Patients Attended	Annual Turnover Of Patients Per Clinic
Allopathic	139	3,823,689	27,508
Homeopathic	48	1,197,249	24,943

Table No. - 2 -Total Revenue Expenditure

Clinics	Total Expenditure (in INR)	Total No.of Patients Attended	Average Expenditure Per Patient Visit(in INR)
Allopathic	294,188,000	3,823,689	76.9 1.32 (€/Euro)
Homeopathic	18,472,000	1,197,249	15.43 0.26(€/Euro)

Table 3. Expenditure per Clinic

Expenditure Heads	Expenditure (in INR)	Average Expenditure per clinic INR)
Allopathic Clinics (n= 139)		
Salaries	259,988,000	1,870,417 32,249 (€/Euro)
Medicines	34,200,000	24,6043 4,242 (€/Euro)
Total	294,188,000	2,116,460 36,491(€/Euro)
Homeopathic Clinic (n= 48)		
Salaries	16,272,000	339,000 5,844(€/Euro)
Medicines	2,200,000	45,833 790(€/Euro)
Total	18,472,000	384,833 6,634(€/Euro)

Table 4- Expenditure per Patient Visit

Expenditure Heads	Expenditure(in INR)	Average Expenditure Per Patient INR)
Patients at Allopathic Clinics (n= 3,823,689)		
Salaries	259,988,000	67.99 1.17 (€/Euro)
Medicines	34,200,000	8.94 0.15(€/Euro)
Total	294,188,000	76.93 1.32 (€/Euro)
Patients at Homeopathic Clinics (n= 1,197,249)		
Salaries	16,272,000	13.59 0.23- (€/Euro)
Medicines	2,200,000	1.84 0.031- (€/Euro)
Total	18,472,000	15.43 0.261- €/Euro)

3. Cost-benefit evaluation of homeopathic versus conventional therapy in respiratory diseases

A retrospective observational study was conducted on 105 out of 233 patients suffering from chronic respiratory disease attending the Homeopathic Clinic of the Campo di Marte Hospital in Lucca (Tuscany, Italy) between October 1998 and May 2003. We assessed the cost of conventional medicinal products using Anatomic Therapeutic Chemical (ATC) classification, specific for the pathology in question, and the general costs in the year preceding the first appointment at the Homeopathic Clinic vs. the first and second year subsequent to homeopathic treatment. The costs of conventional drugs for a group of patients affected by asthma (8 patients) and recurrent respiratory infections (16 patients) with long term use of conventional medicine treated by homeopathy were compared with the expenses of conventional drugs of a matched group of 16 and 32 patients, respectively. (3)

Costs of pharmacological therapy specific for respiratory diseases were reduced by 46.3% (n=105) in the first year ($P<0.01$); and by 47.5% (n=72) in the second year ($P<0.01$) of homeopathic treatment. Reduction in general drug costs during homeopathic therapy was 42.4% in the first year ($P<0.01$); and -49.8 in the second year (N.S.). Costs for patients affected by chronic asthma showed a reduction in expenses of 71.1% for specific medicines relative to the group in homeopathic treatment vs. an increase of 12.3% in the group treated only with conventional drugs after the first year of follow-up and, respectively, a reduction of -54.4% for homeopathic treatment vs. +45.2% after the second year. For patients with

recurrent respiratory infection, we found a reduction of 35.8% in the homeopathic group in the first year, compared to an increase 8.6% of costs for specific drugs in the control group; in the second year the respective figures were -43.6% versus +7.8% in the control group. (3)

Homeopathic treatment for respiratory diseases (asthma, allergic complaints, Acute Recurrent Respiratory Infections) was associated with a significant reduction in the use and costs of conventional drugs. Costs for homeopathic therapy are significantly lower than those for conventional pharmacological therapy. (3)

4. Assessment of social and economic impact of healthcare with homoeopathy for haemophilia in cognizance with patients' perspective: a cross-sectional survey

Haemophilia imposes clinical as well as an economical burden on family and society. To assess the social and economic impact of healthcare in haemophilia from patients' perspective a questionnaire was formed. Out of 900 patients treated at homoeopathy in haemophilia centres. 478 patients participated in the survey in the time period of January 2017 to June 2017. This questionnaire consisted of five categories. Part A included preliminary information, part B included the disease information, part C included direct cost incurred in terms of factor therapy, and part D included indirect cost incurred whereas part E included additional information regarding therapy satisfaction. It was across-sectional survey-based study. Simple random sampling was used for sample collection at the multi centres of homoeopathy in haemophilia. Study duration was 5 months. Selection criteria were patients diagnosed with haemophilia and patients willing to participate in the survey. Ethical approval was received from Institutional Ethics Committee of Motiwala (National) Homoeopathic Medical College, Nasik, Maharashtra, India. Average was calculated to summarize the data, mentioned in discussion. Results: 56% haemophilia patients benefitted with homoeopathy treatment with SOS use of factor, 28% patients experienced homoeopathy is beneficial therapy and 16% patients experienced conservative management. 95.6% patients experienced satisfaction with treatment. 95.2% patient said homoeopathy is most economic therapy, 1.3% patient said it is a conservative management and 3.6% did not acknowledge anything. According to patients' perspective, homoeopathic therapy was found to reduce the cost of care and burden of high-cost management. (4)

Aim and objectives

1. To analyse the economic burden of chronic disease in India and its effect on healthcare system.

2. To examine the role of homoeopathic system of medicine in managing chronic illness through individualistic homoeopathic treatment.
3. To evaluate homoeopathy as a cost-effective health care option in long term disease management.

Methodology

Retrospective observational study of various government reports, published observation and comparative studies.

Results

1. Cost per visit and service delivery

Across public sector primary care setting and large outpatient homoeopathic clinic the average cost per patient visit in homoeopathy has been consistently lower than conventional clinics.

2. Reduction in long term medication use

Observation studies in chronic respiratory and allergies disorder shown that from homoeopathic care often demonstrate a progressive reduction in conventional drug consumption over time particular in inhalers and bronchodilators, antihistamines and topical steroids.

3. Patient reported economic benefit

Patient survey in chronic disease has high satisfaction with homeopathic care and large proportion of patient perceiving lower overall treatment cost. Reduced dependence on expensive emergency and rescue medications.

Discussion

The evidence from public sector service delivery, public survey and observation studies indicates that homoeopathy provides chronic care at a substantially lower cost per patient. From health economics perspective this is highly relevant to universal health coverage. In context of vikshit Bharat where health is foundation of national development, homoeopathy offers a sustainable, affordable and scalable model for managing chronic disease at the community and primary care level

Conclusion

In to the context of this, identifying homeopathy as healthcare models that are both clinically effective and economically viable is essential for achieving Universal Health Coverage and the vision of Vikshit Bharat. This study highlights the potential of homoeopathy as a cost-effective healthcare system for the management of chronic diseases. Observational

and comparative evidence suggests that homoeopathic care can deliver comparable or improved clinical outcomes at equal or lower overall costs.

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