

Homeopathy and Respiratory Illness

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), millions of Americans suffer from respiratory illnesses every year. Even short-lived respiratory infections affect health-related quality of life (HRQL) indices; and therapeutic interventions, like homeopathy, that help resolve these conditions in an expedient and healthy manner are highly sought after.¹

Substantial evidence supports the use of homeopathic medicine in these conditions.

In April 2005, the European Committee for Homeopathy (ECH) evaluated the treatment of over 6,000 subjects using a Quality of Life questionnaire, finding that 89% of those with bronchial asthma improved rapidly while using homeopathy. These high rates were sustained when individuals were followed for 2 years or more. Sixty-seven percent of individuals with respiratory tract infections improved rapidly while using homeopathy compared to 56% of those who utilized conventional treatment during the same time period.² These findings were consistently noted in both acute or chronic respiratory illnesses, leading the authors to conclude that homeopathy is a safe and natural solution that is effective in many common ailments of the respiratory tract.

Homeopathy and Upper Respiratory Tract Infections

Upper Respiratory Infections (URIs) affect millions of Americans each year and result in significant amounts of time lost both at work and in school. Most URIs are viral in origin, and thus unresponsive to antibiotic treatment, leaving those affected with few options other than over-the-counter medicines. For those with underlying chronic medical conditions, such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a common cold can lead to serious complications including exacerbations of bronchitis or pneumonia.

An observational study performed in Germany evaluated 397 subjects with URIs. They compared the use of a complex homeopathic preparation, with conventional therapies including antihistamines, antitussives, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs. Symptoms included fatigue, sensation of illness, chills/tremors, aching joints, overall severity of illness, sum total of all clinical variables, temperature, and time to symptomatic improvement. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of those receiving homeopathic treatment reported improvement in their symptoms within 3 days compared with only 61% of those who received conventional care. The authors of this study concluded that homeopathic treatment may be useful for providing relief of symptoms from the common cold.³

A placebo controlled randomized trial examined the efficacy of using homeopathy to treat young children with URIs and determined that there was a significant advantage gained by using homeopathy when compared with placebo. Symptoms of sneezing and cough, as well as the accumulated cold scores were significantly improved at both the first and the second assessments among those receiving the homeopathic treatment compared to those in the placebo group. This

¹ Linder JA, Singer DE. Health-related quality of life of adults with upper respiratory tract infections. *J Gen Intern Med* 2003; 18(10):802-7. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/14521642>

² Van Wassenhoven M. Priorities and Methods for Developing the Evidence Profile of Homeopathy: Recommendations of the ECH General Assembly and XVIII Symposium of GIRI. *Homeopathy*; April 2005:94,107-124. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1475491605000251?via%3Dihub>

³ Klein-Dipl P, Schmiedel V. A Complex Homeopathic Preparation for the Symptomatic Treatment of Upper Respiratory Infections Associated With the Common Cold: An Observational Study. *EXPLORE*; Vol 2, (Issue 2, March 2006): 109-114. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1550830705005811>

study showed that a homeopathic medicine is effective in reducing the severity of cold symptoms within the first day after beginning treatment.⁴

Another study of 169 children under 10 years of age, diagnosed with URIs, randomly assigned them to receive either homeopathic treatment, or allowed them to utilize self-selected conventional therapies. They found a significant difference in the median total symptom score for the homeopathy group (24 points) versus the control group (44 points) ($p = 0.026$). There was also a statistically significant difference between the number of days that symptoms persisted in the two groups. The homeopathic treatment group experienced symptoms for an average of 8 days compared with the self-selected therapy group, whose symptoms persisted for an average of 13 ($p = 0.006$).⁵

Homeopathy and Sinus Infections

The CDC reports that sinusitis affects 26.9 million adults in the US and is one of the most common chronic infections in the nation. Rhinovirus, the most common cause of acute sinusitis, also triggers exacerbations of asthma and other chronic conditions.

A randomized placebo-controlled study of 42 participants examined the efficacy and safety of a homeopathic combination medicine in the treatment of sinusitis. The study measured total nasal symptoms scores (TNSS) over a 2-week period and evaluated changes in individual symptom scores (ISS) over the same time frame.

Mean TNSS and ISS were noted after single dosing at various time periods over 60 minutes. Variables analyzed included rhinitis quality-of-life, rescue medication use, and safety endpoints. The homeopathically treated group exhibited significantly better improvements in TNSS and ISS ($P < .01$). The homeopathic treatment group had a better average time to first relief versus the placebo group ($P < .01$). The study also noted improvement in nasal congestion, sinus pain, sinus pressure, and headache at 5, 10, 15, and 30-minute intervals, persisting at 60 minutes for nasal congestion and sinus pain ($P < .05$).⁶

Another randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial looked at the effectiveness of a complex homeopathic medication in the treatment of acute maxillary sinusitis (AMS). One hundred and thirteen (113) patients with radiography-confirmed AMS participated in a 22 day trial with 8 weeks follow-up. Outcome measures included a change in the sinusitis severity score (SSS) from baseline.

The homeopathic treatment group demonstrated a significant reduction in the SSS score compared with that of the placebo group (6.0 points vs 2.0 points; $P < .0001$) at seven days. On day 21, 68.4% of the homeopathic treatment group noted complete remission of AMS symptoms compared with only 8.9% for the placebo group. The authors of this trial concluded that

⁴ Jacobs J, Taylor JA. A randomized controlled trial of a homeopathic syrup in the treatment of cold symptoms in young children.

Complementary Therapies in Medicine; Vol 29 (Dec 2016): 229-234. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0965229916302771>

⁵ Bentzena N, et al. Homeopathic care for the prevention of upper respiratory tract infections in children: A pragmatic, randomised, controlled trial comparing individualised homeopathic care and waiting-list controls. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*; Vol 13 (Issue 4, Dec 2005): 231-238. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0965229905000750>

⁶ Bernstein JA, et al. A randomized, double-blind, parallel trial comparing capsaicin nasal spray with placebo in subjects with a significant component of nonallergic rhinitis. *Annals of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology*, Vol 107 (Issue 2): 171 – 178. [https://www.annallergy.org/article/S1081-1206\(11\)00383-8/fulltext](https://www.annallergy.org/article/S1081-1206(11)00383-8/fulltext)

homeopathic treatment is safe and appears to be an effective treatment for acute maxillary sinusitis.⁷

Homeopathy and Asthma

Asthma is a chronic medical condition frequently triggered by many environmental factors including allergens, air pollution and the common cold virus. According to the CDC, approximately 20.4 million American adults suffer from asthma. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that at least 235 million people suffer from asthma worldwide. Asthma is the most common non-communicable disease among children.

In 2001, asthma was among the 10 conditions most commonly treated by homeopaths in US.⁸ The main benefits of homeopathic treatment include a decrease in the frequency and the intensity of acute asthma attacks, as well as the complete resolution of the condition, in some cases.⁹

A retrospective study, examining children with allergic bronchial asthma who were treated homeopathically, found that: 44.2% of patients demonstrated "satisfactory improvement"; 36.7% demonstrated "manifest improvement"; 18.3% had "relative improvement"; and less than 1% (0.8%) had "no reaction" to homeopathic intervention.¹⁰

Another retrospective study evaluated both adults and children with bronchial asthma treated with individualized homeopathy for more than 3 years. The authors found a statistically significant decrease in both the frequency and severity of attacks during and after treatment. They also found that those treated homeopathically had a marked decreased in their use of conventional medications.¹¹

Homeopathy and Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) refers to a group of respiratory illnesses including chronic bronchitis and emphysema. According to the CDC, COPD was the third leading cause of death in the US in 2014.

A prospective, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study with parallel assignment was performed to evaluate the use of the homeopathy in 50 COPD ventilator-dependent patients in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Measured variables included changes in the amount of tracheal secretions, the time to successful extubation and length of stay in the ICU.

The researchers found that the amount of tracheal secretions was significantly reduced in the homeopathically treated group ($p < 0.0001$). Homeopathically treated patients were extubated sooner ($p < 0.0001$), and discharged sooner from the ICU (4.20 days vs 7.68, $p < 0.0001$). This

⁷ Heger M, et al. Efficacy of a Complex Homeopathic Medication (Sinfrontal) in Patients with Acute Maxillary Sinusitis: A Prospective, Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled, Multicenter Clinical Trial. *EXPLORE*; Vol 3(Issue 2, March 2007): 98-109.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1550830706005635>

⁸ Doerr L. Using Homeopathy for Treating Childhood Asthma: Understanding a Family's Choice. *J Ped Nurs*. 2001; 16(4): 269-276.
[https://www.pediatricnursing.org/article/S0882-5963\(01\)33405-X/abstract](https://www.pediatricnursing.org/article/S0882-5963(01)33405-X/abstract)

⁹ Garcia C. Homeopathy as an alternative for asthma treatment. *Int J High Dilution Res*; 10(36): 201-202.

¹⁰ Mosquera Pardo MF. Bronchial asthma in childhood: management by means of homeopathy. *Proc 2nd OMHI Congress, Mexico*; (1990)156-166.

¹¹ Eizayaga FX, Eizayaga J. Homoeopathic treatment of bronchial asthma. *Br Homeopath J*; 85 (1996): 28-33.

study supports the use of homeopathic treatment of COPD patients, particularly in severe exacerbations.¹²

Conclusion

Respiratory illness is a common cause for the utilization of medical resources in the U.S. Preliminary studies strongly suggest that this is an area where homeopathy excels, and can help to reduce not only the duration of illness, but the intensity of symptoms suffered. When used in conjunction with conventional medical care for life-threatening conditions including asthma and COPD, homeopathy provides a safe, reliable and natural support for individuals suffering from respiratory illnesses.

About the Author

Samantha Conboy CCH, M.A. is a board-certified classical homeopath with a practice in San Diego, CA. Samantha is passionate about working with families and equipping moms with homeopathy so that they can help their families when they are sick. Samantha has been in practice since 2008 and is the current President of the Council for Homeopathic Certification.

¹² Dielacher C, et al. Influence of potassium dichromate on tracheal secretions in critically ill patients. *Chest*; March, 2005 (127):936-941. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/15764779>



Conclusion from Americans for Homeopathy Choice

When properly manufactured and applied, homeopathic medicine plays an important role in the treatment of patients with major health problems across the globe. Homeopathy is inexpensive, effective, and inherently safe. When properly utilized, homeopathy makes it possible to make what already exists currently in the conventional health care system, more effective. For example, homeopathy makes it possible to avoid overuse of antibiotics, reserving antibiotics for when they are actually needed. Homeopathy also reduces the need to rely on dangerous and addictive painkillers in various situations including postoperatively, and after injury. Among many other benefits, homeopathy also helps reduce the incidence of polypharmacy.

Positive results such as these are achieved because homeopathy is a well-developed system of individualized medicine. Those who use homeopathy consider it a “designer” medicine, customized to their specific needs.

We are concerned that the proposed Draft Guidance on homeopathy will undermine the right of individuals to choose homeopathy, and also undermine the very important role homeopathy has to play in addressing these health problems. This paper gives an example of how homeopathy can address serious problems in our current healthcare system - specifically the issues involving **respiratory illnesses**. It is important that FDA actions strengthen rather than undermine homeopathy so that it can meaningfully contribute to and support the American healthcare system.