

Homeopathy and Pain

Homeopathy is a holistic modality that effectively addresses many of the underlying causes responsible for ongoing pain, often enabling the resolution of acute and chronic pain syndromes. Managing pain in a holistic manner is associated with the opportunity to resolve these states, rather than simply suppressing them with addictive pain medicines, which is so often the *modus operandi* of most conventional management strategies.¹

Opioid Addiction

Homeopathy has tremendous potential to help with one of our nation's largest healthcare crises – opioid addiction. Not only are there many homeopathic medicines that address pain effectively, but it also helps those who are addicted to drugs and alcohol to successfully and safely detox while remaining sober.²

One formal research study and two observational studies completed in Boston, MA indicated the benefits of the homeopathic medicine *Nux vomica* in the treatment of post-acute withdrawal syndrome.³ The completion rate in these two projects was twice as high in the homeopathic treatment group compared with the conventional group (66% versus 33% in the first, and 63% versus 37% in the second). No adverse events were reported in either of these cohorts.

The third study looked at a 28-day inpatient treatment program over the course of one year. The majority (77%) of those clients who used homeopathy completed the program successfully compared with 53% who did not. No adverse events were reported in the homeopathic treatment group, but those who did not use homeopathy were more likely to leave against medical advice, or be involuntarily discharged due to violent and unruly behavior.

The homeopathic medicine *Nux vomica* is an effective treatment option for hangovers and other symptoms associated with drug induced liver toxicity. Its affinity for the neurological as well as hepatic systems have been well documented and animal studies demonstrate that it reduces alcohol cravings.⁴

Homeopathy for Pain Management

¹ Whitmont RD. The Opioid Epidemic. *Am J Homeop Med* 2017;110(4):26-30.

² Bakshi, JPS. Homeopathy: A new approach to detoxification. *J OMHI* 1993;6(2):24-32.

³ Butehorn L. Post-acute withdrawal syndrome, relapse prevention, and homeopathy. *Alt Comp Therapies* 2017. doi.org/10.1089/act.2017.29139.lbu

⁴ Sukul NC, Ghosh S, Sinhababu SP, et al. Strychnos nux-vomica extract and its ultra-high dilution reduce voluntary ethanol intake in rats. *J Altern Complement Med* 2001;7(2):187–193.

Pain management is considered “the leading edge” of CAM modalities with respect to integration into conventional health care in the US.^{5,6} Several textbooks detail the homeopathic treatment of pain syndromes.^{7,8}

A large-scale study in France demonstrated 50% reduced use of NSAIDs and significantly less use of opioids when homeopathic medicines were prescribed by conventional trained primary care physicians. Long term results, measured by pain reduction and quality of life were significantly improved with the use of homeopathy.⁹ Results suggest that homeopathic medicines act faster than conventional pain medications while reducing the need for them,^{10,11} without any of the associated dangers of dependence or withdrawal effects.¹² Homeopathy is superior to placebo in reducing pain in many medical conditions including endometriosis,¹³ joint pain and stiffness,¹⁴ and hemorrhoids.¹⁵

Homeopathic Medicines for Specific Pain Conditions

Post-Surgery/Post-Dental Extraction Pain Management

The use of Arnica pre- and post-operatively reduces bruising, swelling, soreness and pain.^{16,17} Other homeopathic medicines are useful in the augmentation of wound healing, reduced scarring, prevention of infection and palliation of nerve pain.^{18,19}

Homeopathic treatment is effective in a wide range of clinical scenarios including toothache, burning mouth syndrome and trigeminal neuralgia.²⁰ The homeopathic medicine *Hypericum perforatum* demonstrates in particular affinity and benefit with respect to nerve pain.²¹

⁵Weeks J. Academic group leads change for hospitals in integrative pain treatment priorities. Integrator #169, Feb. 28, 2017 accessed at <https://www.integrativepractitioner.com/whats-new/news-and-commentary/academic-group-leads-change-hospitals-integrative-pain-treatment-priorities/> on March 15, 2017.

⁶American College of Physicians. Noninvasive treatments for acute, subacute, and chronic low back pain: a clinical practice guideline from the American College of Physicians. *Annals of Internal Medicine Clinical Guidelines* 14 February 2017.

⁷Loes M, Ullman D. Homeopathy. In: Boswell MV, Cole BE eds. *Weiner’s Pain Management: A Practical Guide for Clinicians*. 7th edition, New York: Taylor and Francis, 2006

⁸Whitmont RD, Mamtani R. *Homeopathy and Chronic Pain*, Chapter 17 in *Complementary and Integrative Medicine in Pain Management*, Weintraub MI, Mamtani R, Micozzi MS, eds. Springer, NY. 2008: 337 – 368.

⁹Rossignol M, Begaud B, Engel P et al. Impact of physician preferences for homeopathic or conventional medicines on patients with musculoskeletal disorders: results from the EP13-MSD cohort. *Pharmacoepidemiol Drug Saf* 2012 Oct;21(10):1093-101.

¹⁰Friese KH, Kruse S, Moeller H. The homeopathic treatment of otitis media in children—comparisons with conventional therapy. *Int J Clin Pharmacol Ther* 1997 Jul;35(7):296-301.

¹¹Robertson A, Suryanarayanan R, Banerjee A. Homeopathic Arnica montana for post-tonsillectomy analgesia: a randomised placebo control trial. *Homeopathy* 2007 Jan;96(1):17-21.

¹²American Pharmacists Association Handbook of Non-Prescription Drugs. Washington, DC: American Pharmacists Association, 15th edition.

¹³Teixeira MZ, Podgac S, Baracat EC. Potentized estrogen in homeopathic treatment of endometriosis pelvic pain: a 24-week, randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study. *Eur J Obstet Gynecol Reprod Biol* 2017 Apr;211:48-55.

¹⁴Karp JC, Sanchez C, Guilbert P et al. Treatment with Ruta graveolens 5CH and Rhus toxicodendron 9CH may reduce joint pain and stiffness linked to aromatase inhibitors in women with early breast cancer: results of a pilot observational study. *Homeopathy* 2016 Nov;105(4):299-308.

¹⁵Das KD, Ghosh S, Das AK et al. Treatment of hemorrhoids with individualized homeopathy: an open observational pilot study. *J Intercult Ethnopharmacol* 2016 Jun 25;5(4):335-342.

¹⁶Robertson A, Suryanarayanan R, Banerjee A, op.cit.

¹⁷Iannitti T, Morales-Medina JC, Bellavite P, et al. Effectiveness and safety of Arnica Montana in post-surgical setting, pain, and inflammation. *Am J Ther* 2016 Jan-Feb;23(1):e184-97.

¹⁸Pommier P, Gomez F, Sunyach MP et al. Phase III randomized trial of Calendula officinalis compared with trolamine for the prevention of acute dermatitis during irradiation for breast cancer. *J Clin Oncol*. 2004 Apr 15;22(8):1447-53

¹⁹Hostanska K op cit.

²⁰Eames S, Darby P. Homeopathy and its ethical use in dentistry. *Brit Dent J* 2011 April 9;210(7): 299-301.

<http://www.nature.com/bdj/journal/v210/n7/pdf/sj.bdj.2011.237.pdf> FIX

²¹Raak C, Bussing A, Gssmann G et al. A systematic review and meta-analysis on the use of *Hypericum perforatum* (St. John’s Wort) for pain conditions in dental practice. *Homeopathy* 2012 Oct;101(4):204-10.

Symphytum officinale reduces pain and swelling after placement of dental implants when used alongside conventional pain medications.²²

Homeopathic treatment was found to be successful in helping 58% of patients avoid a root canal, tooth extraction or pulp capping procedure in a small study employing the injection of the homeopathic medicine Pulpa dentis.²³

Fractures

Homeopathy speeds bone healing while reducing the need for analgesics.²⁴

Labor pain

The homeopathic medicine Caulophyllum thalictroides reduces labor pain without any side effects in either mother or infant.^{25,26}

Trigeminal neuralgia

In a four month study of the homeopathic treatment of trigeminal neuralgia, known as the “suicide disease”, significant reductions of pain (60%) were achieved.²⁷

Back pain and other musculoskeletal disorders

A year-long study performed in France compared patients with a variety of musculoskeletal disorders, including osteoarthritis, rheumatism, fibromyalgia, muscle spasms, tendinitis, rotary cuff syndrome, ankylosing spondylitis, intervertebral disc disorders, neck pain, torticollis, and spinal stenosis. The homeopathic treated patients used 25% fewer narcotics and half as many NSAIDs as the conventionally treated group. There were fewer adverse events in the homeopathic treatment group, but no differences in specific functional scores or loss of therapeutic opportunity. Patients in the homeopathic cohort tended to have more longstanding chronic conditions before treatment.²⁸

A two-year multicenter study performed in Germany with patients receiving individualized professional homeopathic treatment for chronic low back pain revealed that disease severity was significantly reduced along with utilization of conventional treatments and health services. Quality of life in the homeopathic treatment group improved significantly, both in physical and mental component scales.²⁹

²²Mazzocchi A, Montanaro F. Observational study of the use of Symphytum 5CH in the management of pain and swelling after dental implant surgery. *Homeopathy* 2012 Oct;101(4):211-6.

²³Hamre HJ, Mittag I, Glockmann A et al. Pulpa dentis D30 for acute reversible pulpitis: a prospective cohort study in routine dental practice. *Altern Ther* 2011 Jan/Feb;17,1:16-21.

²⁴Sharma S, Sharma N, Sharma R. Accelerating the healing of bone fracture using homeopathy: a prospective, randomized double-blind controlled study. *BMC Complement Altern Med* 2012; 12(Suppl 1):O61.

²⁵Eid P, Felisi E, Sideri M. Applicability of homeopathic caulophyllum thalictroides during labour. *Brit Hom J* 1993;82(4):245-248.

²⁶Eid P, Felisi E, Sideri M. Super-placebo ou action pharmacologique? Une étude en double aveugle, randomisée avec un remède homéopathique (Caulophyllum thalictroides) dans le travail d'accouchement. Proceedings of the 5th Congress for Homeopathic Medicine, Paris, France, 1994.

²⁷Mojaver YN, Mosavi F, Mazaherinezhad A, et al. Individualized homeopathic treatment of trigeminal neuralgia: an observational study. *Homeopathy* 2007;96(2):82-86.

²⁸Rosignol M op cit.

²⁹Witt CM, Ludtke R, Baur R, Willich SN. Homeopathic treatment of patients with chronic low back pain: a prospective observational study with 2 years' followup. *Clin J Pain* 2009 May;25(4):334-9.

Studies in Europe demonstrate homeopathy provides superior relief from back pain when compared with placebo, and generates fewer adverse events.^{30,31,32}

In summary, homeopathy holds tremendous potential in the treatment of pain related conditions and in the management of opioid dependence. Further research in both these clinical areas is certainly warranted. Public health benefits gained from utilizing homeopathy include superior efficacy, lower cost, greater safety and higher patient satisfaction.

About the Author

Burke Lennihan, RN, CCH has worked in holistic health care since graduating from Harvard University in 1974. She co-founded the Renaissance Institute of Classical Homeopathy and subsequently directed Teleosis School of Homeopathy. Lennihan co-authored Cough Cures with distinguished pulmonologist Gustavo Ferrer, MD and co-authored a book on holistic animal care with Margo Roman, DVM, while her own Your Natural Medicine Cabinet educates the public about home care with homeopathy. She has edited several standard reference works in homeopathy including Yasgur's Dictionary and Hahnemann Revisited, a textbook for professionals.

³⁰Beer AM, Fey S, Zimmer M et al. [Effectiveness and safety of a homeopathic drug combination in the treatment of chronic low back pain: a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled clinical trial.] *MMW Fortschr Med* 2012 Jun 28;154 Suppl 2:45-57. [Article in German]

³¹Stam C, Bonnet MS, van Haselen RA. The efficacy and safety of a homeopathic gel in the treatment of acute low back pain: a multi-centre, randomized, double-blind comparative clinical trial. *Brit Hom J* 2001;90:21-28.

³²Morris M, Pellow J, Solomon EM, Tsele-Tebakang T. Physiotherapy and a homeopathic complex for chronic low back pain due to osteoarthritis: a randomized, controlled pilot trial. *Altern Ther Health Med* 2016 Jan-Feb;22(1):48-56.



Conclusion

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. The following paper gives an example of how homeopathy can address serious problems in our current healthcare system - specifically the issue of ***pain management***. It is important that FDA actions strengthen rather than undermine homeopathy so that it can meaningfully contribute to and support the American healthcare system.