



## Homeopathy and Gastrointestinal Disorders

Homeopathic medicine has a powerful effect on the human microbiome and the gastrointestinal tract. It is an extremely helpful modality that helps preserve ecological balance within this organ while aiding in the treatment of a wide array of disorders. A limited number of peer reviewed randomized controlled studies attest to its effectiveness and many more case studies from the literature demonstrate its feasibility and validity. A summary of the current literature follows.

### Cancer

- Between 50-90% of cancer patients in the U.S. utilize Complementary and Alternative medical (CAM) treatments, including homeopathy.<sup>1</sup> Throughout Europe, homeopathy is used by up to 76% of patients.<sup>2</sup> Homeopathy has been used successfully in many difficult and “incurable” cancers both in combination with conventional medicine<sup>3</sup> as well as in isolation as a sole therapeutic intervention.<sup>4,5</sup>

Physicians at the Prasanta Banerji Homeopathic Research Foundation (PBHRF), in Kolkata, India have treated more than 17,324 cancer patients, noting complete regression in 19% and stabilization or partial regression in 21%.<sup>6</sup> Cancer case studies from this Foundation were submitted by to the National Cancer Institute (NCI) “Best Case Series Program” and found to merit prioritization for accelerated research funding.<sup>7,8</sup>

Homeopathic medicines demonstrate many selective cytotoxic and antineoplastic properties in human cancer colon cells both *in vivo*<sup>9</sup> and *in vitro*.<sup>10</sup> Anti-cancer effects in COLO-205 cells demonstrate cell cycle arrest at G2/M phase and apoptosis by mitochondrial mediated pathways.<sup>11</sup> Homeopathic medicines appear to selectively target cancer cells with only minimal impact on surrounding “healthy” tissue.<sup>12,13</sup>

A range of studies and retrospective case series indicate that homeopathy has provided curative treatment for an array of GI cancers including oral, periampullary, esophageal,<sup>14</sup> liver, gall bladder, stomach and pancreatic both *in vitro* and *in vivo*.<sup>15,16,17</sup>

Homeopathy is also effective in reducing the severity of the many side-effects associated with conventional cancer treatments including immunotherapy and chemotherapy induced nausea, insomnia, depression, anxiety, asthenia, incontinence, and hot flashes.<sup>18</sup> Additionally homeopathic medicine prophylactically reduces the intensity and severity of topical burns associated with radiation therapy.<sup>19</sup>

### Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)

Homeopathy combined with lifestyle and dietary changes, dramatically improves GERD, helping to restore gastric ecology, and improve Lower Esophageal Sphincter (LES) function without inducing the host of other health disturbances commonly associated with conventional treatments.<sup>20,21,22, 23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31</sup>

## **Liver and Gallbladder Disease**

Diseases of the liver and the biliary tract have been treated effectively with homeopathic medicines,<sup>32</sup> including cases of cirrhosis,<sup>33</sup> viral hepatitis,<sup>34,35,36</sup> and fulminant hepatic failure.<sup>37</sup> Homeopathic medicines provide useful prophylactic effects, protecting the liver against medication and toxin induced injuries.<sup>38</sup>

Homeopathy provides an excellent resource in pain management thus reducing exposure to more harmful drugs such as acetaminophen, NSAIDs, and opiates.<sup>39</sup> Using homeopathic medicines in this manner avoids iatrogenic induced hepatic injury,<sup>40,41</sup> reduces inflammation and improves recovery time from injuries, dramatically lowering the need for more problematic interventions.

## **Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth**

Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) is an increasingly common dysbiosis<sup>42</sup> whose etiology is not well understood, but frequently develops after alterations in gastrointestinal architecture, motility, pH and gut microbiome constitution.<sup>43</sup>

Homeopathy is an inherently effective modality in SIBO since it helps reduce the use of other more damaging medications that are associated with high relapse rates.<sup>44</sup> Utilizing homeopathy in the GI tract helps conserve the integrity of the gut microbiome and prevent its development.<sup>45</sup>

## **Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)**

Homeopathic treatment of IBD and IBS has been demonstrated by numerous case studies<sup>46,47,48</sup> and experimental protocols.<sup>49</sup> Homeopathy is beneficial across a wide range of these conditions<sup>50,51,52,53</sup> improving symptoms, quality of life, digestive function, and reducing risks associated with the use of conventional medications.<sup>54,55</sup>

A recent Cochrane review looking at the pooled data from two studies using a simplified form of homeopathy found benefit beyond placebo in those patients with constipation-predominant IBS.<sup>56</sup>

An outpatient survey performed in Switzerland determined that homeopathy was one of the most frequently used alternative modalities in patients suffering from Crohn's disease and Ulcerative colitis, with more than 67% experiencing improvement with long-term treatment.<sup>57</sup>

## **Diverticulosis and Diverticulitis**

Both diverticulosis and diverticulitis are associated with a variety of factors including diet, lifestyle, and microbiome health.<sup>58</sup> Conventional treatment strategies, including surgery and antibiotics, tend to be overused and are associated with significant risk of complications.<sup>59</sup>

Clinical experience demonstrates that individualized homeopathic treatment is beneficial in the prevention and treatment of early stage diverticulitis and reduces the need for more invasive and disruptive interventions.<sup>60</sup>

## **Constipation and Diarrhea**

Two of the most common conditions affecting the GI tract are constipation and diarrhea. According to a survey of patients suffering from constipation in the United Kingdom, only 25% were satisfied with conventional treatments while 43% resorted to using alternative approaches including homeopathy.<sup>61</sup> Several studies<sup>62</sup> and many case reports testify to the benefits of homeopathic intervention.<sup>63</sup>

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) diarrhea is the second leading cause of death in children under five years old. There are nearly 1.7 billion cases annually and nearly 525,000 children die as a result.<sup>64</sup>

Several studies performed in remote rural locations found that individualized homeopathic treatment of infectious diarrhea is expedient, clinically and cost effective, shortens both duration and frequency of stools, and improves quality of life.<sup>65,66,67,68,69</sup>

## **The Acute Abdomen**

The acute abdomen, including acute pain, ileus, biliary colic, cholestasis, choledocholithiasis, cholecystitis, pancreatitis, appendicitis, peritonitis, colic, and sepsis syndromes have responded to the integrated application of homeopathic treatment, particularly in the intensive care unit (ICU).<sup>70</sup>

Post-operative ileus, which frequently develops after invasive intra-abdominal surgery also responds well to homeopathic treatment. A meta-analysis of six studies demonstrate a significant benefit of homeopathy over placebo reducing the duration of post-operative ileus and shortening the time to first flatus.<sup>71</sup>

In summary, homeopathy is beneficial in a wide range of gastrointestinal tract disorders, but further clinical investigation and prioritization is necessary. Many cured cases have been recorded in the worldwide homeopathic literature, but these represent only a tiny fraction of those seen and helped by the hundreds of thousands of homeopathic physicians in worldwide daily clinical practice. Prioritization of research in homeopathy is sorely needed, particularly in the realm of gastrointestinal disorders.

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### 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 gastrointestinal disorders**. It is important that FDA actions strengthen rather than undermine homeopathy so that it can meaningfully contribute to and support the American healthcare system.