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Homeopathy and eczema: A case study on the efficacy of sulphur

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Abstract

Eczema, a chronic dermatological condition characterized by intense itching and dry, scaly skin, poses significant challenges. The study highlights the case of eczema subjected to individualized case study and repertorial analysis, and remedy selection, culminating in the prescription of Sulphur based on the totality of symptoms and has pictorial evidence for showing improvement. The methodology of homeopathy focuses on individualized treatment, stressing the importance of matching the remedy's profile with the patient's specific symptoms. Sulphur was justified due to its correspondence with the patient's intense itching, aggravation from heat, skin dryness with discoloration, and general constitutional traits such as a desire for sweets and aversion to covering. Follow-ups and photographic documentation provided evidence of the remedy's effectiveness, showcasing the potential of homeopathy as a viable alternative for eczema management.

Keywords: Case study, eczema, homeopathy, individualized treatment, sulphur, symptomatology

Introduction

Eczema, from the Greek for 'to boil over', is also known as dermatitis and represents a pattern of skin inflammation that can be either acute or chronic [1]. While the exact cause of eczema is not fully understood, it is believed to be linked to an overactive immune system response and a compromised skin barrier function, which fails to retain moisture and protect against irritants and allergens [2]. These symptoms can flare up due to environmental triggers, and while there is no cure, treatments are available to manage and alleviate symptoms [3]. The condition is thought to arise from a combination of genetic and environmental factors, leading to an overactive immune response and impaired skin barrier. Conventional treatments often involve topical steroids and immunomodulators, which can have side effects and may not always provide long-term relief. This has led to a growing interest in alternative therapies, including homeopathy, which offers a personalized approach to treatment. Homeopathic treatment aims to stimulate the body's natural healing response rather than just alleviating surface symptoms. Remedies are selected based on various factors, including the cause, location, sensation, and modalities of the eczema, as well as the patient's overall constitution and health history [5]. The goal is to bring about a long-term improvement in the patient's skin health and overall well-being.

Through this exploration, we seek to contribute to the body of evidence supporting homeopathy as a viable option for those seeking a natural and sustainable approach to managing eczema, and to encourage further research and discussion within the medical community on the integration of homeopathic methods into dermatological practice.

Material and Methodology

A case of eczema was registered in the Outpatient department (O.P.D) on 4.5.24. Case taking and through examination was done as per the homeopathic case recording guidelines. Selection of medicine was based on computerized repertory and final reference to *Materia Medica*. Follow-ups were recorded in the case sheet and documentation was evidenced with photographs of the patient.

Case report

A 47 years old female came to the O.P.D on 4.5.24 with complaints of eruptions on the extensor side of both the arm and forearm for 3 years increased for 2 months. The patient has intense itching³⁺ that leads to scratching²⁺ and bleeding. Skin is very dry and has blackish

discoloration. Itching is aggravated during sun exposure and perspiration. The patient did not take any allopathic medication for the presenting complaints. Her father has a history of allergic rhinitis. She has good appetite and can withstand hunger. She drinks enough water. She passes stool regularly. She passes urine 4-5 times per day. Her sleep is satisfied. She has profuse perspiration. She has desire for sweets. Desires fanning. Doesn't prefer covering.

Clinical Diagnosis: Eczema

Skin: O/E: Blackish discoloration of the skin

Skin is dry and rough

Symptoms of the case

Eruptions on extensor surface of arm, Intense itching, Scratching, Blackish discoloration

Selection of repertory

The case, characterized by a significant absence of general symptoms and a focus on specific symptoms related to pathology, led to the selection of Murphy Repertory as a clinical tool [6].

Remedy Name	Sulph	Ars	Calc	Lyc	Merc	Psor	Sep	Calc-s	Graph	Kali-ar	Rhus-t	Sil
Totally	18	16	14	14	14	14	14	12	12	12	12	12
Symptoms Covered	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
Kingdom												
[Murphy] [Food]Sweets, general, (see Sugar):Desires: (147)	3	3	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	1
[Murphy] [Perspiration]PROFUSE: (222)	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	3	2	3
[Murphy] [Skin]Eczema, skin: (177)	4	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	2
[Murphy] [Skin]Eruptions, skin:Dry: (92)	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	1	3
[Murphy] [Skin]Eruptions, skin:Itching, eruptions: (169)	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	2
[Murphy] [Skin]ITCHING, skin:Warm, on becoming agg.: (78)	4	1	1	2	3	3	1	1	1	2	1	1

Fig 1: Repertory chart – Homopath Zomoeo Pro [7]

Treatment

Selection of remedy and potency

The Remedy selected was Sulphur by further reference to Materia Medica and potency selected was 200C.

Justification

The justification for prescribing Sulphur in the eczema case is based on its alignment with the patient's symptoms and general characteristics:

- Intense itching that leads to scratching and bleeding [8], which Sulphur effectively addresses.
- Aggravation from heat, as the patient's symptoms worsen with sun exposure and perspiration, a common indication for Sulphur [8].
- Dry, scaly skin with blackish discoloration, which matches Sulphur's skin symptom profile [8].
- General traits such as a desire for sweets, aversion to covering, and preference for fanning, are consistent

with the Sulphur constitution [8].

The choice of Sulphur is made after a thorough analysis of the patient's symptoms, ensuring a close match with the remedy's known effects. Regular follow-ups are essential to assess the treatment's progress.

Results

The improvements are evident from the photographic documentation. The patient first visited on 04/05/24, when Arsenicum album 200 was prescribed. However, due to a lack of improvement, the case was re-evaluated. Following repertorization, Sulphur was administered on 11/05/24. By 28/05/24, the patient demonstrated significant improvement, with noticeable changes in the skin eruptions. The itching was considerably reduced, and the patient reported feeling better within a span of 2 weeks.

Before: 11. 05. 2024



Fig 2, 3: The patient reported before 11. 05. 2024

After: 25.05.2024



Fig 4, 5: The patient reported after: 25.05.2024

Table 1: Follow up

Date	Symptom	Prescription
11/05/2023	Eruptions on both hands Severe itching is present < - Scratching ³⁺ < - Sun exposure ³⁺ Blackish discoloration of skin persists Dry skin persists.	Rx Sulphur 200C/ 1D in 10ml aqua 10gtt x 2hourly
28/05/2023	Eruptions on both hands decreased Severe itching has been reduced < - Scratching 3+ < - Sun exposure ³⁺ Blackish discoloration of skin persists Dry skin persists	Rx Sulphur 200C/ 1D in 10ml aqua 10gtt x 2hourly

Discussion

In homeopathy, the treatment of eczema focuses on the individual’s symptoms and constitution rather than the disease itself. The selection of the remedy is based on the totality of symptoms, and in this case, the computerized repertory and Materia Medica were referenced for medicine selection. The patient’s good appetite, regular bowel movements, and specific desires (for sweets and fanning) are also considered in the remedy selection process.

Homeopathy treats eczema in two phases. The first phase aims to control the itching, and the second phase focuses on healing the lesions and controlling the progression of the condition. Remedies such as Graphites, Sulphur, Natrum Mur, Petroleum, and Psorinum are among the top choices for treating eczema in homeopathy. These remedies are selected based on the individual’s symptom presentation and are known for their efficacy in treating both dry and moist eczema without side effects ^[9]

- The patient’s desire for sweets and aversion to covering may indicate a Sulphur constitution, as Sulphur is known to be effective for itchy eczema with symptoms worsening in warm temperatures.
- The patient found immediate relief within a span of 2 weeks after administering the remedy

Conclusion

This case shows how homeopathy treats eczema by picking a treatment that fits the patient's own symptoms. How the patient gets better with the treatment helps decide what to

do next, with the goal of slowly getting rid of symptoms and improving health.

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Of patient consent

The Patient has given his consent for reporting his clinical information in the journal. The patient understands that his name and initials will not be published, and due efforts will be made to conceal his identity, but anonymity can’t be guaranteed

Conflict of Interest

Not available

Financial Support

Not available

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