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**Review** Article

# **A BRIEF REVIEW ON HOMEOPATHY**

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# Abstract:

Homeopathy remains one of the most controversial subjects in therapeutics. Homeopathy is a controversial form of complementary therapy, but is widely practised to treat many diseased conditions. Homeopathy can be defined as 'a therapeutic method that often uses highly diluted preparations of substances whose effects when administered to healthy subjects correspond to the manifestation of the disorder in the unwell patient'. It is one of the most popular forms of complementary and alternative medicine in the UK and elsewhere. The reasons for this widespread use are probably complex, but the assumption that homeopathy is safe is certainly an important factor. The aim of this review is to provide a complete history of the Homeopathy.

Keywords: alternative medicine, homeopathy, History,

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#### **INTRODUCTION:**

#### HISTORY OF HOMEOPATHY

Christian Fredrick Samuel Hahnemann was the genius who discovered a unique system of healing, which is popularly known to all, as 'HOMOEOPATHY'. He rooted the foundation of this art and its principles through his extensive efforts, and devoted his entire life for the development and worldwide spread of Homoeopathy.

#### Birth and Academics:

Hahnemann was born on 10th April 1755, in Meissen, a beautiful town across the river Elbe, in Saxony of Germany near Dresden. His father's name was Christian Gottfried Hahnemann who was a painter in the porcelain factory and his mother was Johanna Christiana. Hahnemann was the third child of his parents. His parents guided him to read and write in the initial days till he started going to the town school where he completed his further education. His father was an idol for him and Hahnemann always had a strong desire to be a 'hard task worker' like him. He traveled to various places to gain good knowledge of medicine in spite of various obstacles and eventually completed his M.D. from the Erlangen University in 1779.

#### Medical Practice

After completing his M.D. Hahnemann started his medical practice in a small town. During that era, medical practitioners adopted harsh and cruel methods to treat the sick, which were not only ineffective but also had harmful effects on patients. Hahnemann was extremely disappointed by the then prevailing system of medicine and decided to leave his practice. He started studying chemistry and wrote many articles/essays regarding the same subject. In 1790, while he was translating a book, Cullen's Materia Medica, he came across an observation made by the author that cinchona bark cures 'swamp fever' (malaria) because it is bitter and has tonic effect on the stomach. In his quest for the true explanation, Dr. Hahnemann ingested 4 drachms of juice of the bark and was surprised to find that he himself developed symptoms of 'malaria fever'. This experiment gave rise to the idea; that a substance cured an illness in a sick person because it was capable of producing symptoms, similar to the illness in an apparently healthy individual. This experiment led him to establish the principle of 'SIMILIA SIMILIBUS CURANTUR' (like cures like) in 1796 and thus a new system of medicine 'HOMOEOPATHY' originated.

Later, he made important contributions in terms of translations, articles, books, and discovered curative

values of many medicines. During this period Hahnemann had to face a lot of opposition from allopathic physicians but he stood firm and faced it with lot of grit and courage. However, he received a strong support not only from his disciples, but also from his first wife who was a great moral support to him during this struggling period.

Hahnemann's long and sustained efforts bore fruit in the form of the first 'Homeopathic Hospital' in 1832 and many Homeopathic colleges opened all over Europe thereafter.

Hahnemann could not settle down his practice at one place because of his medical rivals, but this did not deter him from successfully spreading Homeopathy. He was very popular amongst patients, and people from all over the world came to seek treatment from him. He got married for the second time at the age of 80 years and his second wife supported him in his journey thereafter. <sup>[1, 2, 5, 8, 18]</sup>

By the end of his career, Hahnemann not only gained name, fame, recognition and money but above all he attained 'peace', after a long struggle with poverty, hardship and opposition. He spent the last few years of his life at Paris where he eventually passed away on 2nd July 1843 at the age of 89 years.

As a mark of respect to this great man, many statues and monuments are seen not only in Germany but also in other countries. His valuable works and contributions are stored as a treasury by Dr. Haehl in his museum.

Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann was the founder of a new system of medicine, which he evolved through his extensive efforts. He devoted more than half his life for its worldwide spread, and rooted the foundation of this science and art so firmly that till today Homoeopathy is practiced and recognized worldwide. In fact it is gaining immense popularity with all sections of society among all nations. Hahnemann therefore is rightly called the, ' Father of Homoeopathy.

#### **DISCOVERY OF HOMOEOPATHY**

In 1790, while, translating, 'Cullen's Materia Medica', he came across the therapeutic indications of the Peruvian (Cinchona) bark and its success in the treatment of intermittent fever. However, Hahnemann was dissatisfied with this explanation and he himself took 4 drams of china twice a day. To his great astonishment, he developed symptoms very similar to malarial fever. He conducted similar experiments on other individuals and finally concluded that, medicines cure the diseases because they can produce similar diseases in healthy individuals.<sup>[2,4,7]</sup>

After the discovery of the therapeutic law, Hahnemann concentrated few years on the collection of morbid effects of various poisonous and medicinal substances from the writings and observations of the more ancient and modern toxicologists, as well as from the experiments. He published the results of his first trial in 1796 and the next two trials in the following years, but soon found them insufficient and inadequate. He realized that the only way to test the medicines and poisons carefully, accurately and systematically was upon the healthy individual. He proved about 90 medicines and 10 volumes of his proving came up due to his hard work and dedication. Hahnemann always proved the medicines on himself. Besides this he also devoted himself solely to his immense practice, corresponding and consulting. He spent a lot of time on every case taking, caring for each patient, accurately recording each symptom and carefully selecting the remedy for him or her.

# **OPPOSITION TO HOMOEOPATHY**

The Duke of Saxes, Gotha offered Hahnemann to take charge of an asylum for the insane in Georgenthal in the Thuringian Forest. Hahnemann was the first person to treat insane people, who were otherwise treated very harshly, in a very gentle manner. He was among the earliest ones who preached to treat the insane with mildness, which has now become universal. He wrote, "I never allow insane people to be punished by blows or other painful inflictions, since there can be no punishment where there is no sense of responsibility and since such patients cannot be improved by such rough treatment". He shared his achievement with Panel. Hahnemann then shifted to Walscheleben, where he wrote the first part of, 'FRIEND TO HEALTH' and first part of his PHARMACEUTICAL LEXICON. In 1794, he went to Pyrmont in Westphalia and thereafter to Brunswick. In 1795, he went to Wolfenbuttel and then he went to Konigslutter where he remained until 1799. In this interval, he wrote second part of his 'FRIEND TO HEALTH' and PHARMACEUTICAL LEXICON. In 1796, he wrote for his friend, Hufeland's journal, in which the discovery of Homeopathy was brought to light through his essay titled, 'AN ESSAY ON NEW ASCERTAINING PRINCIPLE FOR THE CURATIVE POWERS OF DRUGS AND SOME **EXAMINATIONS** OF THE PREVIOUS PRINCIPLES'. In this essay, Hahnemann firmly expresses his beliefs that for chronic diseases at least, those medicines should be employed that have power

of producing similar affections in healthy individuals. This was published in Hufeland's 4, journal vol II, part 3 & PAGES 391-439 & 456-561. In the same journal he published an interesting case illustrative of his views and wrote another essay on,' Irrationality of complicated systems of diet and regimes and complex prescriptions'. He also put forward his new doctrine of SIMILIA SIMILIBUS CURANTUR (LIKE CURES LIKE) opposite to Contraria Contraris Curantur (Opposite Cures Opposite). This was the birth year of Homeopathy. Hahnemann had to leave Konigslutter with his whole family, all his property in a large carriage, and a heavy heart. Many people whose lives were saved by the Belladonna had accompanied him some distance on the road to Humburg. However, fate turned out in an accident, where the carriage overturned, and Hahnemann had to face a great emotional loss. His infant child was injured so badly that he died after a short time and the leg of one of his daughters was fractured. Hahnemann also suffered from some injuries. He had to face financial loss due to damage to his property that had fallen in the stream. He was taken to the nearby village where he had to stay for six weeks for his daughter's treatment. Then he moved to Humburg, but soon noticed that he had no scope there. Hence he left for the nearest town of Altona from where he traveled to Mullen of Lauenburg. [6,7,10,18]

His strong desire to go to his hometown Saxony drew him to Machern and then to Dessau, where he published a monograph on, 'COFFEE AND ITS EFFECTS'. He considered coffee as a source of chronic disease, and was against the use of it as a common beverage. In 1800, he published remarkable articles in the preface, of translations of collection of medical prescriptions. It contained a marvelous preface, "Reader you have purchased this book thinking to find there is a royal way to practice of physic, but you are miserably mistaken to believe there can be any such shortcut. Skill in practice can only be gained by careful, unwearied and honest study; by having perfect knowledge of the curative instruments, you have to yield, and by accurate observation of the characteristic symptoms of the disease"

The years, 1805 and 1806 are important for the development of doctrine. In 1805, he published 'MEDICINE OF EXPERIENCE' in Hufeland's journal. During 1806-1809, he published the journals, which contained the things that had never been written before. This included especially his essay on the value of speculative system of Medicine and a tough and earnest letter to Hufeland. The doctrines were rejected by the old school but favored by public. Thereafter the

number of his admirers and non-medical disciples increased from day to day. In 1810, he published the first edition of 'ORGANON OF THE RATIONAL ART OF HEALING' in which he outlined and explained methods of Homeopathy, and criticized other systems of treatment especially, Allopathic. Professor Becker of Berlin wrote against him to which Hahnemann replied in a vigorous manner.

He later went and settled down in Torgan. He realized that by making such discoveries only brought him opposition and criticism from the medical world. Hahnemann discontinued writing in their medical journals and published his writings on the ancient medicine. He however still remained firm and decided to move ahead. In 1811, he published the 1st volume of 'MATERIA MEDICA PURA', which contained the pathogenesis of the medicines, which he had tested on himself and on his disciples silently.

During this period, he was guiding the rising generation of the homeopathic practioners theoretically and practically. Though this failed, he resolved to give a course of lectures upon the system to those people, who were actually interested but they had to pay him for that. This aroused jealousy amongst his professional rivals who called Hahnemann a selfish person. However, Hahnemann defended himself and presented his thesis. 'De Helleborisma veterum' before the medical faculty on 26th June 1812, which was strongly admired by the dean of the medical faculty. Hahnemann was also severely criticized for taking large fees from his patient although he was compassionate and very liberal to poor people. He needed to charge the other patients as he had a large family to support and also because he was very well aware of the services he gave to his, the 1st & 2nd volume of the celebrated work on 'CHRONIC DISEASES, THEIR PECULIAR NATURE AND HOMEOPATHIC TREATMENT 'appeared. However, once again, the professional rivals criticized this but there were many followers in his defense who supported him too.

The medical press of Germany printed a quarterly journal in 1822, which contained many able and vigorous articles in support of Hahnemann's doctrine. Stapf published the first periodical of Homeopathy, 'THE ARCHIVE FOR THE HOMEOPATHIC SCIENCE OF HEALING' with help of Gross and Muller. The 3rd, 4th and 5th volume of the CHRONIC DISEASES containing extensive and valuable proving of new medicines successively appeared during the following two years

# SEVEN CARDINAL PRINCIPLES OF HOMEOPATHY

Every science is based on certain principles and the same holds true for the Homoeopathic science too. There are a few solid, fundamental principles, which form the basis of this great science. It has its own unique philosophy and therapeutics that are founded on seven cardinal principles. They are as follows:

- 1. Law of Similia
- 2. Law of Simplex
- 3. Law of Minimum
- 4. Doctrine of Drug Proving
- 5. Theory of Chronic Diseases
- 6. Theory of Vital Force
- 7. Doctrine of Drug Dynamisation

Let us consider each of these principles in detail to have a better perspective of the Homoeopathic system of medicine. <sup>[12,14,17,18]</sup>

#### 1.Law of Similia

Some like Hippocrates and Paracelsus knew this **Law** of **Similars** even before Hahnemann rediscovered it and founded a whole system of therapeutics based on it. Hahnemann distinctly declares that the phenomenon of cure entirely depends upon this law. In other words, this is the law that governs Homoeopathy and forms the most fundamental basis of this science.

The word 'homoios' means 'like' or 'similar' and 'pathos' means 'suffering' and so Homoeopathy is a 'Medicine of likes'. It is a method of curing the sufferings in a diseased individual by administration of remedies that have the capacity to produce similar sufferings in a relatively healthy individual (by symptom similarity).

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Thus Hahnemann derived the Law of Similia based on this principle, and has stated it in the aphorism number 26 in the book, Organon of medicine, which reads as follows :

A weaker dynamic affection is permanently extinguished in the living organism by a stronger one, if the latter (whilst differing in kind) is very similar to the former in its manifestations."

By this he means, that each individual case of disease is most surely, radically, rapidly and permanently annihilated and cured if the symptoms of the medicine chosen (without it being of the same species) are similar to the disease symptoms but superior to it in strength. Treated by likes' (like cures like).

This law is also called as SIMILIA SIMILIBUS CURANTUR, which means 'Let likes be By this law, he wants to emphasize that, in order to execute a cure and heal an ailing person, a homoeopathic physician needs to administer a drug that produces symptoms that are similar to the diseased symptoms. (14)

#### 2.Law of simplex

Hahnemann states in aphorisms 272-274, 'Only one, single, simple remedy should be administered to the patient at one time'. This is the law of simplex.

He further explains this in a simplified manner as :

- At any given time, only one remedy can be the exact similar to the presenting disease condition of the patient.
- During drug proving, drugs are proved singly and the symptoms then observed are compiled into the Materia Medica.
- If the physician administers more than one remedy at a time, he will be unable to ascertain the curative action of the remedy.

Administration of more than one remedy can produce certain group of symptoms, which can be harmful to the patient. (15, 16)

### 3.Law of minimum

The curative effect of the medicine does not depend only on the selection of a similar remedy but also on the quantity of the medicine. Since the homoeopathic medicines act at a dynamic level, only a minute quantity of the medicine is enough to stimulate the dynamically deranged vital force to bring about the necessary curative change in a patient. This quantitative reduction of the medicinal substance is achieved by the method of potentisation, which avoids the unwanted medicinal aggravation caused by crude substances, and prevents chances of any organ damage. A French mathematician, Maupertius, also observed this same principle and stated, "The quantity of action necessary to affect any change in the nature is the least possible, an infinitesimal'. (Refer- Principles and art and cure by Roberts)

#### **4.Doctrine of drug proving**

After 30 years of homoeopathic practice Dr. Hahnemann realized that homeopathy failed to execute a 'real cure' in some diseases. He observed that in many cases symptoms got ameliorated for a brief period only to relapse at a later date. This intrigued him and made him reflect as to the possible cause of these failures. The following were the probable causes that were considered....

- The Law of Similars might not be universally applicable
- There could be some flaw in the application of the Law of Similars
- The number of drugs till date were inadequate to cover all the diseases
- There could be some error in determining the totality of symptoms
- There might be some obstacles that persisted, which hindered cure

Hahnemann, by his reasoning and logic, excluded the other probabilities and concluded that certain obstacles were responsible for the relapses and failures. So he studied the chronic cases in great depth and after 12 years of studies, he discovered that chronic diseases are caused by chronic miasms.

Miasm is an obnoxious disease-producing agent, dynamic in nature and inimical to life. He founded the theory of miasms and named the miasms as :

- Psora
- Sycosis
- Syphilis

#### Psora

Psora is the mother of all chronic diseases and almost 80% of chronic diseases come under its domain. It is an internal disease, which may exist with or without an eruption on skin. It is the fostering soil for every possible disease condition. Hahnemann realized that psora is not a local skin disease, but a manifestation of an internal disorder of unhealthiness and should never be treated by external remedies. Unless it is thoroughly cured, it persists till the last breath of life.

Psoric personalities are mentally active, quick, alert, but easily prostrated from exertion, both mental and physical. They are very anxious and fear death, that health will fail, of being unable to succeed. Ill-effects from strong emotions grief, fear, etc. Physical manifestations are in the form of itch, skin eruptions etc. Psychosis & Syphilis follows Psora. Remedies : Psorinum, Sulphur

#### 5.Sychosis

Sychosis is generally understood to be the gonorrheal poison but gonorrhea is an acute gonococcal infection that develops after an exposure, while Sycosis is established after a suppressed gonorrhea when the acute infection is driven in upon the vital energy by external methods of suppression making a systematic stigma that permeates every cell of the living organism.

Sycotic personalities are highly suspicious, jealous, vindictive and quarrelsome. They have fixity and rigidity of thoughts. Physical manifestations are seen in the form of warts, gonorrhea etc. Remedies: Thuja, Medorrhinum

# Syphilis

Syphilis is comparatively a modern disease, which occurs through sexual contact. It presents as chancre, and with discharging eruptions on the genitals. Whereas the miasm Syphilis is a lethal poison which when once driven inside or suppressed, starts eating into the system destroying tissues and altering the structure of bones, ligaments etc. Long standing Psora or Psychosis can lead to Syphilis where the manifestations are destructive. There is a chronic desperate struggle to survive, which is similarly seen even at the level of mind.

Syphilitic personalities are hopeless, violent, sadists, criminals and anti-social. The person is slow of comprehension, sullen, stupid, easily angered. The breaking out of an ulcer or hemorrhages relieves mental troubles. Physical manifestations are seen in the form of ulcerations, induration, caries etc. Also, there is marked nightly aggravation of all complaints.

Remedies: Syphilinum, Merc-sol.(17)

# 6.Theory of vital force

Vital force is the invisible vital energy that animates each organism and is the most intimate spark, the essence of the individual. The material organism (body), without the vital force is capable of no sensation, no function, no self-preservation; it derives all sensations and performs all the functions of life solely by means of the immaterial being (vital force), which animates the material organism in health and in disease. In health it is this spirit-like force that governs the life and maintains all the bodily sensations and functions in equilibrium.

When a person falls ill it is only this spiritual, selfacting (automatic) vital force, everywhere present in his organism, which is primarily deranged by the dynamic influence upon it of a morbific (disease causing) agent inimical to life. It is only the vital force, deranged to such an abnormal state, which can furnish the organism with its disagreeable sensations and incline it to the irregular processes, which we call disease.

Hence in disease, there is dynamic derangement of the vital force, which leads to disharmony and alteration of all the bodily functions and sensations. Hahnemann has described about this vital force in the Organon of medicine in aphorism 9 and 10 as follows 'In the healthy condition of man, the spiritual vital force (autocracy), the dynamis that animates the material body (organism), rules with unbounded sway, and retains all the parts of the organism in admirable, harmonious, vital operation, as regards both sensations and functions, so that our indwelling, reason-gifted mind can freely employ this living, healthy instrument for the higher purposes of our existence'.

'The material organism without the vital force is capable of no sensation, no function, no selfpreservation; it derives all sensations & performs all functions of life solely by means of the immaterial being - the vital force which stimulates the organism in health and disease'.

# 7. Doctrine of drug dynamization

Hahnemann began the experiments of the application of proven drugs for the cure of the sick upon the basis of the law of similars, by using drugs in their full strength but many a times, he observed aggravation of the ailments in patients. He reasoned that the dose was too large and hence started diluting the drug on a definite scale. He found to his surprise that the results obtained were much better. He continued this process of dilution until he discovered that the curative power of drugs bore no proportionate relationship to the crude quantity, but by this peculiar and systematic method of dilution based on a regular scale, the concealed curative powers of otherwise inert substances were extracted. He named this process of drug dynamization as 'Potentisation'. Potentisation is a process by which all the medicinal properties, which are latent in a substance, are extracted from their crude form for the curative purpose.

### **HOMEOPATHY DIAGNOSIS:**

The skill of the homeopathy lies in ability to elicit from his patient the precise nature of the symptoms of the illness. Only then can he determine the key substances which will unlock the innate healing response in the patient and assist the "Vital force". Hahnemann swa disease not in terms of an attack on a particular organ but rather generation of an imbalance in in the vitality of the body. Thus the medicine must encourage this vital force within the body rather than act on the body itself. Perhaps this is real secret of success for the groth of homeopathy among the culture of Aisia. Particularly within INDIA. This approach bears a close affinity with the ESTERN philosophy of health and disease, where by body is imbalance of four essential humours and disease is an outward manifestion of an imbalance in these key elements. The holistic approach to diagnosis, which is also famililar, serves to renforce the similarity between these alternatives system of medicine. (18)

The process of diagnosis and the determination of the appropriate remedy is long and involved. The consultation may well last more than an hour, during which time every aspect of the patient's health, past and present, and lifestyle is investigated until a complete history of problems and symptoms is obtained. Unlike the approach on visiting a physician, the first question is ulikely to be What is wrongs with you. The homeopathyist will observe how you are dressed, how you walk with you an talk, if you are over or underweight, your complexion, your height and coloring,' what is the state of health of your family, Are you employed .The homeopathic physician may well also make a physical diagnosis. Armed with the necessary information, he can then make a reference to the records of proving. After much deliberation, he selects a remedy corresponding precisely to the 'totally' of the patient's symptoms.

A simplified approach to diagnosis, based on concept devised by a contemporary of a Hahnemann, Constantine Herring, can be employed in appropriate circumstances. Herring stated that for the treatment of acute condition a suitable remedy could be determine with the presence of only three good symptoms .For example ,a headache itself is of little diagnostic value .However ,if the patient reports that the headache is in one part of the head and associated with visual disturbance is sametimes referred to as pathological prescribing .In many ways it goes against the concept the of the person as whole approach to diagnosis established by Hahnemann. However, it can be of value in treatment as first aid. <sup>[01,03,09,12,13,]</sup>

**PRESCRIBING: Selecting** the appropriate remedy is not a trivial operation. There are some 2500 proving available to the homeopathy. For these he must search through the massive tomes of material medica of new homeopathy remedy. Beaconsfield publisher to match precisely, by a process known as repetoirizing .The patients description of his symptoms to the drug picture. Today, some homeopaths use computer to assist in this process.

Some of the plant employed in the homeopathy have a recognized history of medical use .The quinine alkaloid derived from cinchona has a distinguished record in treatment of maleria .the arnica extract from Arnica Montana has been used extensively orthodox remedy for bruising and local trauma treatment .Its applied for similar conditions in homeopathy strengths of 30c or 200c.however, in dose strengths of 6c or 30c in the treatment of latent of trauma such as surgical operations and accidents which have occurred a number of years past .Other materials are unquestionably poisonous undiluted from . Atropa belladonna clearly fits this category. Ingestion by adult or child of just a few of its attractive berries rapidly produces symptoms of server poisoning; dry mouth, excessive thirst, flushed countenance and restlessness, symptoms which are also characteristic of febrile, infectious illness. Historical, it is reputed to have been successfully employed in the control of scarlet fever .In1801Hahnemann described its use in such case in cure and prevention of scaled fever. [01,04,13,18]

**DISPENSING** As with medicine, the preparation and dispensing of homeopathic remedies is governed by the medicine s act of 1968 and 1971. The same standards of quality control and procedures therefore ,are carried out with meticulous care Once the appropriate potency has been achieved by the material must be medicated ,that is made into a form suitable for dispensing

This is often simply the addition of the potency to a jar of lactose tablets .I t is claimed to be unnecessary to wet each tablet individually ,indeed this may cause contamination and damage the potency .The addition of one drop of the active dilution to the jar containing the tablets is said to be sufficient to transfer the curative power to each and every tablet in the jar .Clearly ,this is a difficult claim to rationalize scientifically .Alternative forms of dispensing homeopathic drugs include powders, where the potency is added to lactose powder, and occasionally as drops in an alcohol solution. Generally, the oral route is favored although administration as a cream or ointment is more common with some preparation. One such example is calendula extract from marigold. This finds use in treatment of eczema and as a first aid ointment or minor abrasions. Generally a homeopathic remedy is dispensed by weight in its original container without the tablet being removed for counting. Again this is because, at very low dilution used contamination might well occur not only to the material being dispensed but also contamination of any other remedy later coming into contact with same surface on which the pills had been counted. Transfer of potency is said to occur to whatever the active substance comes into contact with. Potency cannot be removed once transferred to a substance or surface by simply washing. Only prolonged high temperatures are sad to be able to eliminate a potency. To avoid contamination, glass is used for long term storage of all homeopathic remedies. For similar reason it is also recommended that they are taken by the patient before or after a cup of tea or coffee. Some homeopaths recommended that coffee and tea be avoided completely whilst taking their remedies.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

The homeopathy is an Indian traditional medicine system, this system is based by seven cardinal principle. The homeopathy is most commonly used medicine system and these are safe medication and number of advantages or in this system mainly dilution are used .The homeopathic diagnosis is included by case study or case report.<sup>[13,15,16,18]</sup>

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