

Efficacy of Individualized Homoeopathic Medicines in Substance Use Disorders: A Retrospective Observational Study

Shivani Sharma¹, Varun Puri², Shalu Munjal³

¹PG Scholar, Department of Psychiatry, Sri Ganganagar Homoeopathic Medical College Hospital and Research Institute, Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan

Email: shivaniisharma560[at]gmail.com

²PG Scholar, Department of Psychiatry, Sri Ganganagar Homoeopathic Medical College Hospital and Research Institute, Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan

Email: purivarun98[at]gmail.com

³B. H. M. S, M. D (Hom.), Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Sri Ganganagar Homoeopathic Medical College Hospital and Research Institute, Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan

Email: drshalumunjal[at]gmail.com

Abstract: ***Background:** Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) are chronic, relapsing conditions characterized by compulsive substance seeking and usage, despite harmful consequences. Conventional treatment approaches include detoxification, medication - assisted therapy, and psychotherapy, which may be limited by side effects, compliance issues, or high relapse rates. Homoeopathy, a holistic system of medicine, offers individualized remedies tailored to the physical, emotional, and behavioral patterns of patients. **Objective:** To evaluate the efficacy of individualized homoeopathic treatment in reducing symptoms, cravings, and relapse rates in patients diagnosed with Substance Use Disorders. **Materials and Methods:** This retrospective observational study included 50 patients aged 18–60 years diagnosed with SUDs who were treated at Homoeopathy Clinic between March 2019 and February 2023. Patients were treated for at least 3 months with individualized homoeopathic remedies. The Addiction Severity Index (ASI) and Craving Scale scores were recorded before and after treatment. Statistical analysis was conducted using paired t - tests. **Results:** A statistically significant reduction in ASI composite scores (from 0.52 ± 0.11 to 0.24 ± 0.09 ; $P < 0.001$) and craving scores (from 8.1 ± 1.5 to 3.2 ± 1.7 ; $P < 0.001$) was observed after 3 months of treatment. Commonly prescribed homoeopathic remedies included *Nux vomica*, *Staphysagria*, *Lachesis*, and *Sulphur*. **Conclusion:** Individualized homoeopathic treatment may be a safe and effective complementary approach for patients with SUDs, helping reduce cravings and improve psychological and behavioral outcomes. Further controlled studies are warranted.*

Keywords: Homoeopathy, Substance Use Disorder, Addiction, *Nux vomica*, Craving, Retrospective Study

1. Introduction

Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) pose a significant challenge to global public health, encompassing a range of conditions resulting from the misuse of psychoactive substances, including alcohol, tobacco, opioids, cannabis, and stimulants. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than 35 million individuals globally are affected by drug - related disorders, and harmful alcohol use contributes to over 3 million deaths each year [1]. These disorders frequently result in serious physical, mental, and social repercussions, contributing to higher rates of illness and death, job loss, interpersonal violence, and societal instability. [2].

Conventional management of Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) generally includes detoxification, psychological therapies, and pharmacological agents such as methadone, buprenorphine, naltrexone, and acamprosate. While these treatments are effective in reducing substance intake and encouraging sobriety, they are not without limitations. Common concerns include adverse effects, potential dependence on substitute medications, risk of relapse, and challenges with maintaining long - term adherence to treatment plans. [3]. Due to the complex and layered characteristics of Substance Use Disorders, effective

treatment often requires a comprehensive approach that not only manages physical symptoms but also targets the emotional, psychological, and behavioral dimensions of the condition.

Given the limitations of conventional treatments, there is growing interest in the use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM), such as homeopathy, as supportive or alternative approaches in managing Substance Use Disorders (SUDs). Homeopathy is a holistic system of healing founded on the principle of “like cures like” (*similia similibus curentur*), wherein highly diluted and potentized remedies are prescribed based on the complete symptom profile of the individual, encompassing mental, emotional, and physical aspects. [4].

Homeopathic treatment has traditionally been employed to assist individuals dealing with substance dependence, with a focus on easing withdrawal symptoms, minimizing cravings, managing psychological discomfort, and strengthening emotional stability. Commonly used remedies—such as *Nux vomica*, *Quercus glandium spiritus*, *Avena sativa*, and *Passiflora incarnata*—are selected based on the unique symptom patterns of each patient, particularly in cases involving restlessness, insomnia, irritability, and strong urges for substance use. [5] [6] [7].

Early clinical findings and observational reports indicate that homeopathy may offer supportive benefits in the recovery process from substance use disorders. For instance, a pilot study conducted by Kumar and Das (2018) reported favorable results in managing alcohol withdrawal symptoms through individualized homeopathic care [8]. Likewise, an observational study from India highlighted homeopathy's effectiveness in aiding tobacco cessation, noting a decrease in craving intensity and higher abstinence rates sustained over a six - month follow - up period. [9].

This study aims to explore the potential efficacy of individualized homeopathic treatment in the management of Substance Use Disorders, particularly focusing on its role in **reducing withdrawal symptoms, cravings, and improving overall psychological well - being** in patients undergoing recovery.

Objective

To assess the efficacy of individualized homeopathic treatment in improving outcomes for patients with SUDs, specifically focusing on changes in Addiction Severity Index (ASI) scores and craving levels.

2. Materials and Methods

Study Design

A retrospective observational study conducted at Homoeopathy Clinic, India, from January 2020 to December 2024.

Inclusion Criteria

- Adults aged 18–60 years.
- Diagnosed with a Substance Use Disorder as per DSM - 5 criteria.
- Received individualized homeopathic treatment for a minimum of 3 months.
- Available pre - and post - treatment records including ASI and craving scale scores.

Exclusion Criteria

- Severe psychiatric comorbidity (e. g., schizophrenia, bipolar disorder).
- Patients undergoing conventional pharmacological detoxification simultaneously.
- Incomplete follow - up records.

Screening Process

A total of 50 cases were selected from the clinic database that fulfilled the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Intervention

Patients received individualized homeopathic medicines after detailed case - taking and repertorization. Potency selection (30C, 200C, or 1M) was based on symptom intensity and response. Remedies were repeated as per clinical indications.

Most Commonly Prescribed Remedies

Homoeopathic Remedy	Indications	No. of Patients (n = 50)
Nux vomica	Alcohol, tobacco, irritability, withdrawal symptoms	18
Staphysagria	Suppressed anger, guilt, post - abuse emotions	12
Lachesis	Jealousy, loquacity, loathing, violent tendencies	10
Sulphur	Neglect, egotism, compulsive behavior	10

Outcome Assessment

- Addiction Severity Index (ASI):** Measures the severity across medical, employment, alcohol, drug, legal, family/social, and psychiatric domains. Composite scores range from 0 to 1.
- Craving Scale:** 0 (no craving) to 10 (extreme craving), self - reported by the patient.
- Data was recorded at baseline and after three months of treatment.

Statistical Analysis

Paired t - tests were used to assess pre - and post - treatment scores using IBM SPSS v25. Statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$.

3. Results

Demographics

- Age range: 18–60 years (mean \pm SD: 35.6 ± 10.2 years)
- Gender ratio (Male: Female): 3: 1
- Types of substances used:
- Alcohol: 60%
- Tobacco/Nicotine: 22%
- Cannabis: 10%
- Opioids: 8%

Treatment Outcomes

A statistically significant improvement was observed in all measured outcomes.

Table 1: Pre - and Post - Treatment Scores (n = 50)

Outcome	Baseline (Mean \pm SD)	Post - Treatment (Mean \pm SD)	Change	t - value	P - value
ASI Composite Score	0.52 ± 0.11	0.24 ± 0.09	-0.28	10.52	< 0.001
Craving Score	8.1 ± 1.5	3.2 ± 1.7	-4.9	11.34	< 0.001

Effectiveness of Remedies

Remedy	No. of Patients	*Improved (%)	No Change (%)	Worsened (%)
Nux vomica	18	83.30%	11.10%	5.60%
Staphysagria	12	75%	16.70%	8.30%
Lachesis	10	80%	10%	10%
Sulphur	10	70%	20%	10%

*Improved = Reduction in ASI score $\geq 25\%$ and craving score $\geq 50\%$

4. Discussion

The findings revealed a marked decrease in both Addiction Severity Index (ASI) scores and substance cravings among individuals receiving personalized homeopathic treatment. Notably, *Nux vomica* emerged as particularly effective, especially in cases involving alcohol and nicotine dependence. This aligns with its traditional use in classical homeopathy, where it is commonly indicated for patients prone to heightened sensitivity, irritability, compulsive tendencies, and strong urges for stimulants or intoxicants [10]. It is also recognized for its deep action on the nervous and digestive systems, which are often disrupted in individuals with substance use disorders.

Homeopathy takes a comprehensive approach to addiction treatment, aiming to address not only the physical dependence but also the emotional and psychological factors that often drive substance use. These may include unresolved emotional conflicts, sleep disturbances, anxiety, restlessness, and suppressed feelings—all of which can contribute to continued addictive behavior and the risk of relapse [11]. Remedies like *Avena sativa*, known for its calming effects on the nervous system, and *Quercus glandium spiritus*, frequently used in long-standing cases of alcoholism, have shown benefits when selected according to the individual's unique symptom profile and overall constitution [12].

The individualized and holistic nature of homeopathic treatment offers a broader therapeutic framework that may serve as a valuable complement to standard medical approaches. Although homeopathy is not a substitute for urgent detoxification procedures or specialized psychiatric care in acute or severe cases, it may provide meaningful support in long-term recovery. This includes helping to stabilize emotional health, minimize relapse-related triggers, and enhance adherence to lifestyle modifications [13].

Nevertheless, the absence of a control group and placebo comparison in the present study restricts the strength and applicability of its findings. To establish the credibility and effectiveness of homeopathy in addiction care, well-designed randomized controlled trials (RCTs) involving larger patient populations are necessary. These studies should focus on evaluating therapeutic outcomes, safety profiles, and the potential for sustained relapse prevention over time.

5. Conclusion

Findings from this retrospective observational study indicate that personalized homeopathic care may contribute to a meaningful reduction in substance cravings and enhance overall functioning in individuals with Substance Use Disorders. As an adjunctive approach, homeopathy shows potential in supporting comprehensive and sustained addiction recovery. However, further large-scale, controlled trials are needed to validate these preliminary outcomes and explore their broader clinical applicability.

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None.

Conflicts of Interest

None.

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