

## NEED OF RESEARCH IN HOMOEOPATHY

Dr. D. S. Bhar, M.Sc., Ph.D.

It is a fact that among all the alternative medical systems, according to the World Health Organization, homeopathy is the most sought-after medical treatment method in the world. A large number of people throughout this planet seek this method of treatment for getting relief from their ailments. As per World Health Organization Report 2019, homeopathy is used in 100 member states with 22 member states having regulations for providers, while 13 member states have health insurance coverage. In 99 states, the main challenge with regard to regulatory issues is lack of research data. In spite of the above fact and though Homoeopathic treatment has been found to be effective in a number of diseases, in some quarter homeopathy is still regarded as a pseudo-science. The sceptics always argue that dilution level of homoeopathic medicines is so high that according to classical science no molecule of the original drug material can exist in the dispensed medicine. Till yester years we did not have any answer to this criticism as homoeopathic medicines could not be tested in a laboratory, no instrument was available at that time to detect and differentiate homoeopathic medicines from pure alcohol or water. The only argument we had that we have exhibited number of cures of so-called impossible diseases which cannot be denied. But the situation is changing. With introduction of very sophisticated and accurate instruments, apart from our old argument of showing cure, now we can show that homoeopathic medicines are not merely alcohol or water and our medicines are physico-chemically different from them.

Great homeopaths can usually predict the future of their patients, but can they equally predict the future of their own cherished discipline? In treating any patient, a good homeopathic physician tries to understand the history of the patient. What is her/his nature? How has she/he reacted to various stressors throughout her/his lifetime? In understanding how a patient reacts to stress and strain, the dedicated physician can see how to best support that natural struggle for

health and survival. So how is our “patient”—homeopathy—doing in the world? What is our prognosis for the healing art of Dr. Hahnemann? The answer to that depends on which expert you ask. Some feel the situation is hopeless, while others see a new dawn for homeopathic medicine on the planet. Let’s look a bit closer at how our “patient” has been doing since its inception. Homeopathy was born as a “heretic” from mainstream medicine of the time. Its progenitor, Samuel Hahnemann, was a great researcher in the field of medical science, and with his devotion and ingenuity to understand the unknown, to find the correct method of treatment of a diseased person, discovered this healing art of treatment. But what happened after Hahnemann? Only a handful person tried to understand the true Science behind this Art of Healing and with the passage of time, unable to resist the onslaught from different corners of medical fraternity, the true spirit of homeopathy is dying. Still to-day homeopathy is regarded, by and large, as merely an Art and not a Science. But why this happened? Let us have a closer look at the problem. In this article, let me attempt to identify and understand the challenges in homeopathy to be resolved through research and to find solutions to overcome them.

### **Research to establish unambiguous method of selection of medicine:**

We all know what a miracle can be shown by an experienced homoeopathic practitioner by curing a very difficult patient with a few infinitesimal small doses of his medicine. But the problem lies when his students ask why that very medicine has been prescribed, though their effort to find a suitable medicine after case taking and by Repertorization of the symptoms shown by the patient, a number of probable medicines appear and they are in a fix to find the true similimum. The only answer they hear from the teacher is that by his experience he has selected the similimum

among all those medicines. Here lies the question how to find out the very symptom which leads to selection of the medicine what the experienced physician is doing with his intellect and experience but in most cases unable to explain with very clear reasoning the pathway of finding out the peculiar symptom which leads to selection of the similimum. When we try to analyse this problem of selection, it becomes apparent that the same is being selected on some assumption as we have little idea about the exact physiological pathway of functioning of the medicine that is why no clear-cut method is evolving in this regard. This is one of the most common hurdles in homoeopathic practice which has not yet been answered unambiguously and that is the reason why practicing homoeopathy is still an art. Once Hahnemann had said that at his time if a patient went to ten allopathic physicians for his treatment, he would get ten different types of prescriptions, but if he consulted ten homoeopaths, he would get one and the same prescription from all those ten homoeopaths. The situation now has just been reversed. The main reason is definitely our inability to find a good method of selection of our medicine. A good academic research work must be undertaken by the experts to find out a solution of this dilemma, otherwise the new entrants in homoeopathy will not be able to gain confidence in this method of treatment.

Again, once the cure is achieved by employment of the correct medicine, if a sceptic asks about the proof that the very medicine prescribed has effected the cure, there is no full proof answer to the question, as the mode of action of homoeopathic medicines are yet to be proved conclusively. The only answer with us is that the cure has been achieved, what is the physiochemical pathway of the cure is not yet known. The science and the quest of finding the truth will never be satisfied with such an answer. Apart from selection of medicine, more obscure is the choice of potency and doses to be prescribed. There is also no clear-cut method of selection exists which enhances the problem of a beginner. The so-called modern system of medicine already solved this problem and by that streamlined their procedure of treatment. In homoeopathy also these problems must be addressed properly with proper clinical research.

Requirement of research involving Basic Science  
The main barrier before of homoeopathy is to conquer two major hurdles; the first is 'What is in our medicine' and the other is 'How that thing affects cure'. Until and unless these two questions are answered conclusively, homoeopathy will be regarded as pseudo-science by its critics. If homoeopathy is to be proved to be scientific before the world, we shall have to put our full effort to find out answer to these two basic questions. A number of scientists engaged in basic research, who have seen the action of homoeopathic medicines in their own eyes, have started research in the quest of finding what is the curative agent present in our medicine and have achieved very interesting results, which indicates that are medicines are different from mere alcohol-water mixtures, but still we shall have to go a long way to establish unambiguously what is that mysterious agent present in our medicine which is responsible for the medicinal action. Still, those will not the end of our journey as we shall have to prove the biochemical pathway of the material which affects cure and for that stringent clinical research is necessary. In recent years we have heard about the prophylactic effect of *Arsenicum album* against COVID 19 infection, but except some statistics, which of course cannot be ignored, where is that clear-cut experimental/biochemical proof for its prophylactic or immuno-boosting activity in the human body. We need serious research in this line to establish our hypothesis.

### Research involving method of Potentisation:

So far we were discussing about the two greatest hurdles for advancement of homoeopathy. But what about the methods adopted for preparation of our medicines. Have they been standardized so that all the time we get the same effective medicines? The problem of standardization lies in many steps of the preparation of medicine and these are to be handled properly. Stringent research involving method of preparation of medicine is required. Let us start with potentization of medicine, the unique method of enhancing the power of medicine which does not exists in any other system of medicine. But there is no universal standard of the method of

potentization exists. The method of potentization involves serial dilution followed by succussion. But how to shake the diluted material, how much force during succussion is to be imparted to get best result and what is its optimum standard? Pharmacopoeias are silent about that. Even the vehicle to be employed for dilution has also not yet been standardised, some pharmacopoeia indicates 91% ethanol is to be employed for dilution where some other asks to use 70% ethanol, when some other is satisfied even with 42% ethanol. Standardisation of the vessel to be used for potentization is also very important as some preliminary research indicates leaching of silica from new glass bottles is partly responsible for medicinal action and in that case single glass potentization or potentization in container made of plastic or metal will be ineffective. Moreover, if only succussion is enough to increase the potency or dilution followed by succussion is essential in this regard is to be decided scientifically. Research in this field also is very important for preparation of standard medicine.

#### **Research involving method of Trituration:**

Apart from potentization in liquid phase have we ever thought seriously of standardizing method of trituration which is employed for bringing insoluble drug substances into solution? We have been advised only to triturate those insoluble drug substances with sugar of milk in porcelain mortar and pestle till we get 6X potency which is then to be dissolved into water. When a student of science asks why an insoluble material, say iron powder, after attaining 6X potency will dissolve in water, sometime the question remain unanswered, we fail to enlighten them with the information that by trituration we are trying to reduce the particle size of the drug substance so that the drug substance goes into liquid phase after attaining colloidal particle size. During this process, insoluble materials are simply ground or milled for extensive periods. Homeopathic pharmacists have been utilizing this mechanical approach for over 200 years. The size reduction of the bulk source material is achieved through the combined frictional, shear, impact and compressive forces applied during the mechanical trituration process. But if the method

employed commonly for preparation of trituration is good enough to bring down the particle size or if the kind of mortar and pestle being used is hard enough to withstand the friction, so that porcelain powder do not come in to the finished trituration to a large extent, are not being questioned. This also calls for research for finding out the correct material for preparation of mortar and pestle as well as the proper method of trituration.

#### **Research on reproving age-old medicines:**

The necessity of research in the field of homeopathic medicine does not end here. Physicians often face problem in getting desired result even after using well selected medicine or sometime get incomplete cure. This may sometime happen due to miasmatic hindrance but even after removing all those hindrances the desired result may not be achieved. It will be unwise to think that it is always the failure of the physician or failure of the "pathy" itself. The reason may lie with the medicine. But even if the medicine has been prepared with utmost care and even if the selection of the medicine has been made very wisely according to homeopathic principle, the medicine may fail sometime. What may be reason behind this? Let us think about the cardinal principle of homeopathy which says that homeopathy is a therapeutic method of treatment of natural suffering of human being by substances which can impart similar artificial suffering when taken internally. So, while selecting a medicine a homeopath depends on the symptoms recorded in *Materia Medica* for the artificial suffering exhibited by the substance. If the natural suffering of a person appears to be similar to the symptoms recorded in the *Materia Medica*, he employs the very substance as medicine for cure of the diseased person. The problem begins right here; the symptoms given in our various *Materia Medica* were mostly recorded long back, shown during proving of the substance. In most cases it will be found that they were proved some two hundred years ago or nearly so. The materials, if they were sourced from vegetable or animal kingdom, used in proving at that time, may have changed constitutionally due to natural genetic mutation.

Similarly, the constitution of mankind has also changed from that time. As a result, manifestation of reaction of materials collected presently and applied on present subject may naturally differ to some extent from the reactions which were shown long ago. This may be one of the reasons for partial failure of the medicine to affect complete cure and that must be addressed properly. All our age-old medicines require re-proving in the present context for updating of our Materia Medica.

**Research with medicines of nosode origin:**

The medicines of nosode origin deserve special attention. We have seen recently that in the pandemic situation arising out of COVID19 virus against which no 'pathy' had any answer. The so-called modern system of medicine experimented whimsically with many medicines from their arsenal without much success. Ultimately, they had to rely on vaccine prepared from the virus, but repeated request from the homoeopathic fraternity, to allow them to prepare a medicine using the same virus but with homoeopathic technique, fell in the deaf ears of the Government for reason unknown. Not only this, the age-old medicines of nosode origin used by the homoeopathic fraternity are not being prepared anew, as from the literature the standard of their source material cannot be ascertained and any attempt to reprove these nosodes keeping proper scientific data of collection and specification is facing much hindrance from the regulatory authorities on the plea of health hazard. But for progress of homoeopathy, research with these medicines of nosode origin must be initiated at any cost.

**Research on proving methodology:**

While proving a substance for its physiological actions, crude substances were used previously. But now, considering the possibility of poisonous effect of raw drug substances prohibition has been imposed on, leave apart use of raw drug, even use of potencies below 6X. But can potencies 6X or above are capable of exhibiting considerable symptoms in a prover if he is not

very sensitive to the medicine and today finding a prover who is truly healthy and will abide by the norms of proving strictly is almost impossible. And again, we require at least ten such prover for the sake of comparison of the symptoms. Most probably this is the reason why in most cases of proving with 6X or above potency, we fail to get true symptoms. Proving should preferably be done with raw drug substances and if the substance is too poisonous maximum 3X potency should be used for proving of a drug substance. As proving requires very small amount of drug substance, possibility of poisoning is remote. In case of known poisonous drug substances, antidotes may be kept ready for immediate use on subjects if anybody falls ill.

**Research on Shelf Life of medicines:**

Only a few years back, when restriction on use of homoeopathic potencies, older than five years of age was imposed, the Government faced opposition from many quarters as there is no proof of deterioration of activity of old potencies. The rule was ultimately withdrawn though restriction on other types of homoeopathic medicines older than five years of age remains. It is very true that action of a medicine may decrease with age, but it is a matter of research to find out the shelf life of any medicine and for that true scientific research is required.

No science can advance without proper research work and homoeopathy is no exception. For long we relied only on our experience in every field of homoeopathy, be it preparation of medicine or treatment but time has come to give full effort to understand homoeopathy scientifically. Let us indulge ourselves in research on homoeopathy to prove the science as well as the true mettle of homoeopathy.

***LONG LIVE HOMOEOPATHY***

---