Introduction to Homeopathic Medicines

Disclosure:
Richard Mudd, National Pharmacy Educator and Christophe Merville, Dr.Pharm, Director of Education and Pharmacy Development, are employees of Boiron.

1. **Introduction**

   - Complementary and Alternative medicine?
   - Holistic? Empirical?
   - Home Remedies?
   - Placebo?
   - Natural Herbs?

   What should pharmacists know, and why?

2. **Objectives**

   - ACPE#: 0104-0000-20-020-L01-P Contact Hours: 1.0 CEU
   - Initial Release Date: 9/12/20

   Following this knowledge-based presentation, the pharmacist participants will be able to:
   1) Answer basic questions about homeopathic medicines (safety, manufacturing, dosage) from your patients;
   2) List the limits and advantages of homeopathic medicines and
   3) List the indications of four homeopathic medicines (Belladonna, Gelsemium, Apis mellifica, Nux vomica).

   - ACPE#: 0104-0000-20-020-L01-T
   - Following this Knowledge-based presentation, the pharmacy technician participants will be able to:
     1) Identify a homeopathic medicine;
     2) Answer basic questions about homeopathic medicines (safety, guidelines, dosage) from your patients and
     3) List the limits and advantages of homeopathic medicines.

3. **Regulatory Status**

   Homeopathic medicines have been regulated as drugs since 1938. (Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act)

   - The FDA regulates the manufacturing process and distribution of homeopathic medicines.

   - The official compendium is the Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the United States (HPUS), referenced in the United States Pharmacopoeia, and recognized by the FDA.

     - About 1280 strains are described: origin, preparation, control, OTC and Rx levels.
     - General pharmacy: guideline for manufacturing and control.

4. **Generics vs. Brand-named Medicines**

   - Generics
     - 1 medicine
     - Usually pellets or tablets
   - Brand-named medicines
     - Single or multiple ingredients
     - Targeting a set of symptoms
     - Any form (syrups, topicals, drops, eye drops, suppositories, etc.)

   Look at the samples of homeopathic medicines, read the packaging, open them!

5. **Regulatory Status**

   Most homeopathic medicines are sold over the counter (OTC)

   But a few require a prescription:

   - Some strains are toxic: low dilutions are Rx only, (Arsenicum, Mercurial)
   - A few strains are controlled substances for all dilutions (Opium, Coca, Morphinum)
   - The indications must fall into OTC categories (FDA regulation)

   Look at the samples of homeopathic medicines, read the packaging, open them!
STRAINS:
- Plants
- Minerals
- Animals
- Microbes

3 steps:
- Tincture or liquid solution
- Homeopathic dilution
- Final product

Alcohol + Purified water
Inactive Ingredients

IDENTIFICATION – QUALITY CONTROL
MACERATION (16 to 21 days)
The process is described in the HPUS and must comply to cGMP

IDENTIFICATION – QUALITY CONTROL
MOTHER TINCTURE
TRITURATIONS

The process is described in the HPUS and must comply to cGMP

IDENTIFICATION – QUALITY CONTROL
FIRST DILUTION

Mother tincture

C scale: 1% dilutions
1X 10%
1C 1%
1D 1%
3C 1%
30C

Succussion or dynamization: vigorous shaking: 150 times in 7.5 seconds on calibrated device

X scale: 10% dilutions
1X 10%
2X 10%
3X 10%
4X 10%
30X

Succussion or dynamization: vigorous shaking: 150 times in 7.5 seconds on calibrated device

Solid forms for sublingual absorption:
- Multi-dose tube: 80 large pellets
- Unit-dose tube: 1 g small pellets
- Tablets: lactose-based

85% sucrose
15% lactose

Forms

Mother tincture

 Arnica montana 6C HPUS
Stiffness from trauma, Swelling and bruising
Lot#: 12568  Exp. Date : June 2016
UPC #: 321 5132 5115 2
NDC #: 227-585-9

Drug Facts
On mucous membranes:
- intense dryness

On cardio-vascular system:
- congestive headache
- vasodilation of face

On nervous system:
- hyperesthesia
- hallucinations, convulsions
- mydriasis

Generally:
- high fever of sudden onset
- profuse sweating
- inflammatory syndrome

Examples of conditions that can be relieved by homeopathic preparations of Belladonna:
- Congestive headaches:
  - sunstrokes, hot flushes
- Inflammation (skin and mucous membranes):
  - red, hot, painful, swollen
    (sunburns, ...)
- Fever:
  - sudden onset, high fever
  - red face, sweating
  - dry mouth, thirst

On skin and mucous membranes:
- pink edema
- stinging, burning pain
  - relieved by cold compresses

Generally:
- fever without thirst
  - warm skin
  - sudden inflammatory syndrome

Examples of conditions that can be relieved by Apis mellifica:
  (homeopathic preparations of the entire insect)
- Insect stings:
  - pink edema
  - stinging, burning pain
- Inflammation:
  - conjunctivitis
  - sore throat
  - sunburn
  - joint pains
  - With edema, stinging, burning pain relieved by cold applications
- Allergies:
  - hives, hay fever

Selecting a homeopathic medicine is based on:
- The patient’s set of symptoms (functional, etiological, clinical, biological, and factors of aggravation or improvement).
- The existence of a pharmacologically active substance that causes similar symptoms in high doses. (Principle of Similars)

Homeopathy is a therapeutic method using homeopathic medicines.

Homeo: same  Pathos: suffering

Homeopathic treatments can be used:

Alone, in first intent:
- Viral pathologies, stress, anxiety, premenstrual syndrome
- When a pre-existing condition or treatment precludes the use of another medicine.

In association with other medicines:
- Treatment of the allergic terrain.
- Treatment of the recurrences of ENT or urinary infections.

As a palliative therapy:
- Treatment of nausea during chemotherapy
  
  *The treatment must always make ethical sense!*

---

**Atropa belladonna (Solanaceae)**

Pharmaco-toxicological properties (Pathogenesis)

**Honeybee**

Pharmaco-toxicological properties (Pathogenesis)
The level of similarity (between the patient’s set of symptoms and the drug’s pathogenesis) determines the choice of the dilution.

- Low similarity
  - Local symptoms
  - Local and General symptoms
  - Local, General and Behavioral symptoms
  - 6C, 9C, 12C, 15C, 30C

- High similarity
  - Fever, profuse sweating
  - Restlessness
  - Hypersensitivity to noise
  - 6C, 9C, 12C, 15C, 30C

Regimen

- Start as soon as possible.
- Adjust frequency according to intensity of symptoms and decrease frequency with improvement.
- Dose is not body-weight dependent: children receive the same dose.
- Brand-named drugs: dosage is in the drug facts.

Research

- More than 5,000 references in PubMed
  - Physical studies
  - Biological studies
  - Clinical studies
  - Observational studies
  - Pharmaco-economical studies
  - Pharmaco-epidemiological studies
  - Meta-analysis

Clinical Research

Research Study on Kali bichromicum 30C in COPD


- Prospective, double-blind, placebo-controlled randomized study on 50 patients affected with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.
- Patients receive 5 pellets Potassium dichromate 30C twice daily or an identical placebo.
- In treated group, tracheal secretions were significantly reduced (p<0.001)
- Length of stay was significantly reduced (4.2 ± 1.61 days vs 7.68 ± 3.60 days, p<0.001)
Clinical Research on Arsenic Poisoning


- Double-blind, randomized clinical study on villagers from Bangladesh are exposed to arsenic-contaminated ground water.
- In group I (n=55), during the first 11 days, the concentration of As in the urines of treated patient was superior to the placebo group. They receive either Arsenicum album 30C or an identical placebo.
- In group II (n=48), all patients received the verum for 10 days, then stopped for 15 days. 3 cycles were completed. Blood concentrations of As declined on 30th day.
- Toxicity denoting enzymes showed steady decline and were normal 2 months after administration of the drug.

Safety

- Above 4C or 8X, the risk of side effects is very low.
- Some topicals include mother tinctures (sensitization, dermatitis, etc.)
- Adverse drug events are rare, and usually mild and short-lived

- Interactions
  - very low risk from 8X or 4C and above
  - do not mix topicals on the skin

- Contra indications
  - ethical principles (i.e. replacing a prescribed treatment with self-medication)
  - use common sense!

Resources

Center for Education and Development of Clinical Homeopathy (CEDH)
www.cedhusa.org: continuing education, books

National Center for Homeopathy
www.homeopathycenter.org
  list of physicians, manufacturers

American Association of Homeopathic Pharmacists
www.aahp.info
  position statements regarding use of homeopathic medicines for chronic conditions, bioterrorism, avian flu, weight loss, etc.
  seminars for manufacturer and compounding pharmacies

Managers websites (Boiron, Hyland's, etc.)

Conclusion

Homeopathic treatments can be used in many different cases: self-medication, complementary therapy, palliative care.

- Beware of false or outrageous claims, and very low dilutions.
- Ongoing research looks at possible modes of actions.
- Being informed, and competent, is the best way to keep your patient’s trust and better inform them about their choices and their health.

Reasons to Know Homeopathy

- Required, Needed, Knowledge
- Competitive Edge
- Preferred OTC Choice

Chain Pharmacy Today

2020 USA

Kroger
Albertsons
Safeway
CVS
Walmart
Homeopathy in ... Clovis and Fresno

1999: (3) Retailers Selling Homeopathic Medicines

B Alive Health Foods
Kristina's Natural Market
Tower Health Foods
2020: (60) Pharmacies (+ Health Food) Stocking Homeopathic Medicines

- plus 37 more

Homeopathy in Hospital and Oncology Units

Calendula Officinalis (Garden Marigold Homeopathic cream)
Prevention Acute Radiation Dermatitis—Breast Cancer

Patients and Methods
254 patients with 126 patients using Calendula extracts on irradiated areas

Results
- acute dermatitis: significantly lower with the use of calendula
- fewer frequent interruption of radiotherapy
- significantly reduced radiation-induced pain

Calendula cream was more difficult to apply, but self-assessed satisfaction was greater.

Conclusion Calendula Cream is highly effective for the prevention of acute dermatitis of grade 2 or higher and should be proposed for patients undergoing postoperative irradiation for breast cancer.

Oncology Nurse Society—American Society of Clinical Oncology

Thank You