

Individualized Homoeopathic Management of Osteoarthritis with Prominent Psychosomatic Features: A Case Report

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ABSTRACT

Osteoarthritis is a common joint disease that causes pain, stiffness, and difficulty in movement. Emotional stress and psychological problems can sometimes worsen these symptoms. This case report describes a 40-year-old woman who had pain, swelling, stiffness, and difficulty bending both knees for three years, along with a burning sensation in both soles for three months. During detailed case-taking, it was found that she was emotionally affected by her husband's extramarital relationship, which caused persistent sadness, irritability, and a strong desire for company. She had cravings for sweets, reduced thirst, and excessive sweating while eating warm food. Based on her physical complaints and emotional state, an individualized homoeopathic prescription of *Sepia 200C* was selected. After treatment, the patient experienced improvement in knee pain, stiffness, movement, burning sensation in the soles, and emotional well-being. This case suggests that emotional stress may play a role in the development or worsening of osteoarthritis symptoms and highlights the importance of considering both mental and

physical aspects of the patient during treatment.

Keywords: Osteoarthritis, Psychosomatic factors, Emotional stress, Individualized homoeopathy, *Sepia officinalis*

INTRODUCTION

Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common type of arthritis and a major cause of pain, disability, and reduced quality of life around the world. It is a long-term condition that affects the whole joint, including the cartilage, bones, ligaments, joint lining, and surrounding muscles. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), about 528 million people were living with osteoarthritis worldwide in 2019. Among all joints, the knee is the most commonly affected, making knee osteoarthritis a significant health problem. [1] The prevalence of OA continues to increase due to population ageing, obesity, and lifestyle-related factors. [2]

Traditionally, osteoarthritis (OA) was considered a condition caused mainly by aging and the gradual wear and tear of joints. However, recent research shows that OA is influenced by a combination of biological, psychological, and social factors.

The pain experienced in OA cannot be explained only by joint damage, as many people have severe pain despite minor joint changes, while others with significant joint damage may have little pain. Psychological factors such as stress, anxiety, depression, emotional trauma, and unhealthy coping strategies can increase pain perception, worsen physical disability, and contribute to the overall impact of the disease on a person's life.^[3]

Several studies have demonstrated a strong association between osteoarthritis and psychological distress. A systematic review and meta-analysis reported that nearly one-fifth of patients with osteoarthritis experience symptoms of depression and anxiety, highlighting the significant psychological burden associated with the disease. Furthermore, anxiety and depression have been shown to worsen pain intensity, physical disability, treatment outcomes, and quality of life among individuals with OA. These findings support the concept of osteoarthritis as a biopsychosocial condition in which emotional and mental factors can interact with physical pathology and influence symptom expression.^[4,5,6]

From a homoeopathic perspective, disease is understood as a disturbance of the individual as a whole, affecting both mind and body. Therefore, mental and emotional characteristics play a crucial role in remedy selection. Individualized homoeopathic prescribing aims to address the patient's unique symptom totality, including physical complaints, general characteristics, and psychosocial stressors.^[7,8]

Aims and Objectives

Aim

- To understand how emotional stress may affect the symptoms of knee

osteoarthritis and to observe the effect of individualized homoeopathic treatment in such a case.

Objectives

- To study the relationship between emotional stress and the severity of osteoarthritis symptoms.
- To show how mental and emotional symptoms can help in selecting an appropriate homoeopathic medicine.
- To emphasize the importance of treating the patient as a whole by considering both physical and emotional factors.

CASE REPORT

Source of data: MNR Homoeopathic Medical College & Hospital

Proposed Intervention:

Sepia officinalis 200C was selected by repertorisation based on the totality of symptoms

Data collection: Well designed case proforma was used for case taking and Kent repertory was used for Repertorisation.

Confidentiality:

As the research is being done in the hospital attached to the college, the confidentiality of details will be maintained.

Case Presentation

Preliminary Data

Cr. No: G/26/18739

Name: Mrs. XYZ

Age: 40 years

Gender: Female

Occupation: Housewife

Marital status: Married

Religion: Hindu

Address: Hyderabad

Chief Complaint

- Dragging type of pain in both knee joints for 2 years
- Burning pain in both soles for 4 months.

History of Illness

Patient was healthy 2 years ago. One day she visited a pilgrimage along with her family, and there she climbed stairs on bare foot. From there on, she gradually developed pains, first in the right knee joint and then in the left knee joint. There is swelling and a dragging type of sensation which is more on the right side. From then, she's unable to flex the knee properly in position.

Pains got aggravated by standing from sitting posture and ameliorated by walking. She visited an allopathic hospital, used medication, but got temporary relief. Now, the patient is having dragging type of pains in both knee joints

Then, gradually from 4 months she started experiencing burning type of pains in both soles. Initially the burning pain started at the heel region, later the whole sole got involved. This burning pain is aggravated by standing from sitting position and walking, and pain gets ameliorated by putting feet in hot water.

Past History

No relevant past History

Treatment History

Took allopathic medicines for presenting illness but got temporary relief.

Family History

Father: Diabetic, Hypertensive

Mother (68 yrs): Hypertensive

Spouse (51 yrs): H/o Diabetes Mellitus, Hypertensive

Children:

- 1st Son - 24 years, Apparently Healthy
- 2nd daughter - 21 years, Apparently Healthy

Physical Generals

Appetite: 3 times/day, normal, hunger tolerable.

- **Desires:** Leafy vegetables, Sweets ++
- **Aversion:** Chicken, Eggs
- **Intolerance:** Not Specific

- **Thirst:** 1 lit/day, decreased thirst from onset of complaint.

- **Bowels:** Once a day, no hard stools, no blood, no burning.

- **Micturition:** D/N - 2-3/0, no specific odour, slight burning sensation on and off.

Physical Generals

- **Sleep:** Night - 7 hrs, Refreshing.

- **Dreams:** Not remembered.

- **Perspiration:** Profuse in all seasons, more on eating warm food and drinks.

- **Habits:** 2 times tea.

Thermals

Bathing: Hot water in all seasons.

- **Covering:** Prefers in all seasons.

- **Fanning:** Only in summer.

- **Season:** Not Specific.

- **Open air:** Prefers in summer. Chilly??

Gynecological History

Menstrual History

Menarche: 13 years

- **Duration of cycle:** 25 days

- **Flow:** 4 days

- **Concomitants:** Backache during menses for 5 days.

Obstetric History

G2P2L2A0

- All normal deliveries.

- No complications during pregnancy

Life Space Investigation

Patient hails from Lower middle-class family. All her milestones were attained well. She studied up to 1st grade and discontinued because of financial issues in the family. She worked as a maid to give financial support to her family.

Later, she got married and continued to work as a maid for 20 years. Initially her married life was good. Then, because of financial issues, there are a lot of disturbances between her and her husband. She can't tolerate and gets angered when someone opposes her. Later after some years, she came to know about the extramarital affair of her husband and used

to quarrel with him. she always used to be sad about it. She stopped working for 3 years. From then on, she always needed someone by her side.

Mentals

Patient is sad about her Husband's Extramarital affair

Desires company.

Anger on contradiction.

General Physical Examination

Patient is Conscious, co-operative, in sitting position

Vital Signs

- **Temperature:** 97.6°F
- **Pulse rate:** 72 bpm, regular, rhythmic
- **Heart rate:** 72 bpm
- **Blood pressure:** 118/80 mm of Hg
- **Respiratory rate:** 16 breaths/min

General Examination

Pallor: Signs of paleness is seen in palpable Conjunctiva.

- **Icterus:** No signs of Icterus.
- **Cyanosis:** No signs of cyanosis.
- **Clubbing:** No signs of clubbing.
- **Lymphadenopathy:** No signs of lymphadenopathy.
- **Oedema:** No sign of Oedema.

Locomotor Examination (Knees)

Inspection: Antalgic gait. Swelling is present over both knee joint. redness+.

Palpation: Tenderness is present. Warmth felt. Crepitus is present in both knee joint. Stiffness is present. Restricted movements.

Differential diagnosis

- Inflammatory arthritis
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Gout
- Bursitis Investigations

Investigations

- X-ray of Both knee joint (AP view, Lateral view)

- Serum uric acid levels
- Serum Creatinine Levels
- Haemogram

Clinical Diagnosis

Osteoarthritis with Anaemia

Analysis of Symptoms

Common

- Dragging type of pain in knee region.
- Patient is sad about her husband's Extramarital affair.
- Pain gets aggravated by standing from sitting position.
- Pain gets ameliorated by walking.
- Inability to flex her knee.
- Burning type of pain in soles get aggravated by standing, walking.
- Burning pain ameliorated by putting feet in Hot water

Uncommon

- Dragging type of pain more on right knee joint.
- Desires company.
- Desires Sweets ++
- Anger on contradiction.
- Perspiration on warm foods, drinks.
- Decreased Thirst.

Selection of Repertory

Kent's Repertory

As the case is rich in 'mental' and 'physical generals

Evaluation of Symptoms

Grade I

- Sad about her husband's Extramarital affair.
- Desires company.
- Anger on contradiction.

Grade II

- Desires Sweets.
- Decreased Thirst.
- Sweat on Eating warm foods and drinks.

Grade III

- Dragging type of pain more on right side of knee joint

Repertorial Totality

- Patient is sad about the Extramarital affair of her husband.
- Anger on contradiction.
- Desires company.
- Desire for sweets.
- Decreased thirst (Thirstless).

- Profuse sweat on Eating warm foods and drinks.

Rubrics

Sadness, mental depression
 Company, desire for
 Anger, contradiction from
 Perspiration, warm food and drinks
 Desire sweets
 Thirstless

Repertorial Result

Fig. No. 1

Lycopodium 14/5

Sepia 13/6

Ars 12 /5

Argt nit 10 /4

Puls 10 /4

Indicated Remedy: Sepia 200C

Indications of Sepia

A/F: Cold, Alcohol, Change in weather.

Mind: Sadness and weeping, Anger on contradiction, Depressed feeling (she does not want to do anything).

Physicals: Chilly, easily takes cold. Desire sweets, sour things, pickles. Decreased thirst (thirstless even if mouth feels dry).

Particulars: Joint pains in women Esp. during the state of menopause (knee joint). Joint instability. Inability to flex knee. Burning sensations in palms and soles. Ameliorated by warm application

Prescription

Sepia 200C -1 dose 6 pills

SL - 15 days (4-0-4)

DATE	SYMPTOMS	Rx
5/2/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient feels better • Stiffness in Joints reduced • Burning in feet got somewhat better • Sleep refreshed 	SL – 1 month
20 /3/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient is feeling better • Appetite is good • She's taking good quantity of water • Dragging pain in knee got reduced • The Extreme perspiration got improved 	SL – 1 month
22/4/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient feels Better • Knee pains got relieved, she's able to walk normally • Perspiration on warm food and drinks reduced • Burning in soles got relief • Mentally she's improving 	SL – 1 month
21/5/26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient feels better • Buring in soles got reduced 	SL – 1 month

RESULT

The case has shown positive results in symptom of Osteoarthritis. The patient was severely symptomatic before treatment and became mild symptomatic four months treatment. The quality of life was too progressed.

DISCUSSION

Osteoarthritis is a chronic joint disease that causes pain, stiffness, swelling, and difficulty in movement. In this case, the patient had osteoarthritis of both knees along with anaemia and suffered from long-standing emotional stress due to financial problems and her husband's extramarital affair. She was persistently sad, desired company, and became angry when contradicted. These emotional factors appeared to worsen her pain and overall suffering. Homoeopathy considers both mental and physical symptoms while selecting a remedy. Based on the patient's characteristic mental symptoms, desire for sweets, decreased thirst, and other physical complaints, Sepia was selected as the constitutional remedy. This case highlights the possible influence of emotional stress on

osteoarthritis and demonstrates the importance of an individualized homoeopathic approach that addresses the patient's mental, emotional, and physical symptoms as a whole, along with lifestyle modifications to improve overall well-being and quality of life.

CONCLUSION

This case shows that osteoarthritis is not only a physical disease but can also be influenced by emotional and psychological factors. The patient had long-term sadness, emotional dependence, and anger due to problems in her married life, which played an important role in her overall condition. These mental symptoms, along with her physical complaints and general characteristics, helped in selecting Sepia as the most suitable homoeopathic remedy. The case highlights the importance of understanding the emotional state of patients with osteoarthritis, as stress and emotional disturbances may increase pain and affect daily life. Homoeopathy treats the patient as a whole by considering mental, emotional, and physical symptoms together.

An individualized constitutional remedy may help improve overall well-being, coping ability, and quality of life.

More clinical studies with a larger number of patients are needed to better understand the relationship between emotional stress and osteoarthritis and to evaluate the role of individualized homoeopathic treatment in managing chronic joint disorders.

Declaration by Authors

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