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Impact of Individualized Homoeopathic Medicine On Vitiligo With Outcome measurement through Vitiligo Impact Scale (VIS)-22: A Case Report

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Abstract

Vitiligo is chronic, autoimmune cutaneous disorder characterized by milky white lesions with scalloped border due to partial or complete destruction of melanocyte cells. First line-treatment like corticosteroids and phototherapy can re-pigment but they may cause ageing, thinning, striae, atrophy, pruritus, and malignancy of skin. Some scientific article on homoeopathy reported good results of individualized homoeopathic medicine (IHM) on vitiligo. Therefore, IHM was selected for this study. Here, a 69 years old male patient with milky white lesions on left side of face for 10 years, diagnosed as vitiligo, was treated with *Silicea terra* 200CH. Vitiligo was resolved within 4 months. For assessment of the case, photographs and Vitiligo Impact Scale (VIS)-22 score were taken showing complete disappearance of Vitiligo and upliftment of quality of life respectively. A 3 years period of follow-up revealed no recurrence or adverse effect. Post-treatment, assessment of MONARCH score +8 reflected positive association between IHM and vitiligo.

Keywords: Vitiligo, Silicea terra, Homoeopathy, VIS-22, MONARCH

Introduction

Vitiligo is common acquired depigmented skin condition rather than hypopigmentation characterized by well-defined of milky white lesions due to destruction or loss of melanocyte cell.[1] Exposed areas of body are commonly affected such as face, hands, feet as well as body folds and genitalia are also affected. It is progressive and unpredictable disease course and incurs the quality of life.[2] It could be classified into two types, one is segmental and another is non-segmental. [1,2] Vitiligo is often associated with autoimmune disease, type 1 diabetes mellitus, thyroid disorders, alopecia areata. The prevalence of vitiligo has currently occupied 0.5% to 1% of population worldwide with sex equality but adults are more commonly affected than children.[2] 0.46% to 8.8% of Indian population are being affected by vitiligo.[3] Conventional treatments are sun protection (pale-skinned individuals) with vitamin D supplementation, minimization of trauma (vitiligo koebnerizes), topical application of steroids and UVB phototherapy, skin grafting.[4] Among these, no one can produce re-pigmentation and this treatment also frustrating and required to be individualized.[5] In homoeopathy vitiligo is considered as one sided disease and case also considered as individualized which could be made good positive result and increased quality of life by

homoeopathic treatment.[6] Here this case could establish this theory by rapid improvement of vitiligo.

Patient information: 69 years old male patient came to clinic with complaint of well-defined milky white lesion at left side of face. It was present for more than 10 years and took topical application but no improvement occurred.

Medical history: In childhood, he suffered from recurrent tonsilitis and treated by allopathic treatment. At age of 40 years, he suffered from skin disease and got allopathic treatment and finally managed by homoeopathic treatment.

Family history: His father had same type skin lesion and died from long suffering from asthma.

Generals: After consultation obstinacy and timidity of patient was reflected. With this vitiligo he had profuse offensive sweat all over body. He got easily to catch cold. He had desire for cold food and chronic tendency to constipation for many years. He was lean, thin and tall.

Diagnostic assessment: Generally, based on clinical examination vitiligo can be diagnosed by following points: age of onset (usually not present at birth), milky white lesion with scalloped border, leucotrichia, koebner's phenomenon, predilection for site of trauma.[1] In this patient had all these points in favoring to diagnose as vitiligo (Fig.1). Woods lamp is required in fair complexion person. Biopsy can be done to differentiate vitiligo in individual cases. Albeit it is differentiated from albinism where absence of melanin mostly in skin, hair and eye additionally, eye symptoms present in form of photophobia, nystagmus, red reflex; and from piebaldism where depigmented macules typically address with islands of normomelanotic or hypermelanotic macules within area of depigmentation with white forelock (which may eventually disappear) and central area of face and trunk additionally proximal parts of limbs with acral sparing.

Evaluation of symptoms:

1. Obstinate
2. Desire for cold food
3. Profuse perspiration with offensive odour
4. Chilly patient
5. Chronic constipation
6. Easily got cold
7. Vitiligo (white spot-on skin)

Intervention: After Repertorization using Kent's repertory [7] from Zomeo pro software, the top 5 remedies were *Silicea terra, Phosphorus, Arsenicum album, Lycopodium clavatum, Nitric acid* (repertorization sheet in Fig.2). By repertorial totality *Silicea terra, Phosphorus, Arsenicum album, Lycopodium clavatum, Nitric acid* obtained 22, 18, 17, 17, 17 marks out of 8 rubrics respectively and covering 8, 8, 7, 7, 7 rubrics respectively. After consulting the homoeopathic materia medica [8] *Silicea terra* 200CH, 2 doses were prescribed once daily for consecutive 2 days in the early morning followed by a placebo for one month.

Follow-up and outcome: (Details are given at Table 1 below) This milky white lesion on left side of face completely resolved within 4 months of treatment (Fig. 4). Over the 3 years period, this study was carried out to observe any recurrence of disease or any adverse effects occurred but no such events took place. Vitiligo impact scale [9] (VIS)-22 was used to measure quality of life at pre- and post-treatment where it scored 32 and 0 respectively (Fig.5 & Fig.6). Modified Naranjo criteria (MONARCH) [10] was used to assess causal attribution where score was +8 which reflected positive association between homoeopathic medicine and vitiligo (Table 2).

Table 1: follow-up and outcome

Date	Indication	Prescription	Outcome (photograph and VIS-22)
22nd June 2022	Based on repertorial totality consulting with materia medica (Fig. 1 and 2)	*Silicea terra* 200CH, 2 doses (Each dose consist of 4 Globule no. 30) for consecutive 2 days	Fig.1 & Fig.5

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		followed by 1-month identical placebo.	
30th July 2022	Improvement from constipation was just started and continued gradually and skin lesions began to reduce in size. Totality of symptoms was same.	Again, placebo for 1 month.	
30th August 2022	White lesions on face was significantly reduced. Totality of symptoms was same.	Placebo was advised for next one month.	Fig.3
05th October 2022	Milky white lesion at left side of face completely resolved and bowel habit became normal.	placebo	Fig.4 & Fig.6

Discussion

Vitiligo is one of the most common cutaneous disorders of recent time characterized by depigmented milky white lesion with scalloped border due to autoimmune destruction of melanocytes of skin of affected area.[1] Other important risk factors are positive family history, oxidative stress, intrinsic defect of melanocytes.[1,3] While first line of treatment for vitiligo has been chosen topical corticosteroids, topical calcineurin inhibitors, long-term use is strictly limited as they cause skin atrophy, telangiectasis, striae, perioral dermatitis, acne and transient local burning and pruritus.[1,5] Phototherapy (Ultra-violet light therapy) has been used to stimulate melanocytes but it mimics the effect of sun burn resulting in erythema, pruritus, xerosis and premature ageing of skin.[5] A few journal articles had been reported positive result of treatment of vitiligo by individualized homoeopathic medicine without adverse effect. [11-13] A review article on vitiligo published in the year 2021 reported that *Calcarea carbonica, Arsenicum album, Sulphur, Phosphorus, Natrum muriaticum, Thuja Lycopodium, Mercurius solubilis* were most frequently identified as constitutional medicine for repigmentation of vitiligo with exception *Ars sulph flavum*. In this review, talk-about the nosodes were mentioned in static cases as an intercurrent remedy and keeping in mind, frequent remission and relapses which claim as an obstacle to cure of patients as advocated by Dr Hahnemann (Aphorism 3 and 252 in Organon of Medicine).[6]

Mahesh S. et. al. Published an article in 2017 in American Journal of Case Report where they had demonstrated the best result in the treatment of vitiligo achievable by individualized homoeopathic medicine in early stages of disease along with reducing / normalizing other associated clinical condition/ diseases.[12]

Another case series on vitiligo by Pal S. et.al showed that repigmentation of vitiligo was possible through IHM such as *Apis mellifica, Sepia, Phosphorus, Silicea, Sulphur* without any adverse effects. Here, centesimal potency was used except *silicea terra* which was in fifty millesimal potency.[13]

Here we got a patient of vitiligo on left side of face suffering for 10 years. Previously he was treated by conventional treatment for many years but no significant improvement was achieved. Based on *Law of Similia*, in accordance with totality of symptoms of patient, considering Kent's philosophy, applying total addition method of Repertorization, using Kent's repertory from Zomeo pro software, *Silicea terra* 200CH was selected for the case and prescribed. Within 4 months of treatment entire re-pigmentation of vitiligo was possible without repetition of medicine. For assessment photograph were taken as evidence (Fig.1, Fig.3 & Fig.4). Vitiligo impact scale (VIS-22) score at pre- and post-treatment, for quality of life were measured as it incurs human well-being. After treatment, VIS-22 score became 0 from 32 which signified improvement quality of life (Fig.5 & Fig.6).

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Modified Naranjo criteria (MONARCH) was used to observe causal attribution between homoeopathic medicine and case. Score was +8 which highlighted positive correlation between IHM and case (Table 2). Over-a-three years period follow-up was conducted to determine whether any recurrence of lesions or adverse events had occurred; no such instances were reported.

It is evident that a constitutionally selected IHM with proper dose and potency could manage various kind of diseases especially cutaneous affection with a rapid and gentle manner. In homoeopathy, management of chronic disease necessitates a holistic evaluation of patient rather than focusing solely on isolated organ or lesions. The perfectly chosen medicine in accordance with classical guidelines of our stalwarts through individualized approach considering the miasmatic background is very effective in treating this kind of cutaneous affection.

Conclusion: This study has demonstrated that improvement of vitiligo and upliftment of quality of life of patient were possible by holistic approach and personalized care of patient through homoeopathy. Additionally, cost-effectiveness, no side effect, patient safety and no toxicity have been achieved. As it is a single care report, it might conclude the efficacy of individualized homoeopathic medicine. Future studies, in large scale with different study design, will need to validate these preliminary results.

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Table 2: Assessment done by Modified Naranjo criteria (MONARCH) score

Domain	Yes	No	Not Sure/ NA

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1. Was there an improvement in the main symptom or condition for which the homeopathic medicine was prescribed?	+2	-	-
2. Did the clinical improvement occur within a plausible time frame relative to the drug intake?	+1	-	-
3. Was there an initial aggravation of symptoms?	-	-	0
4. Did the effect encompass more than the main symptom or condition (i.e., were other symptoms ultimately improved or changed)?	+1	-	-
5. Did overall well-being improve? (suggest using validated scale)	+1	-	-
6A. Direction of cure: Did some symptoms improve in the opposite order of the development of symptoms of the disease?	-	0	-
6B. Direction of cure: Did at least two of the following aspects apply to the order of improvement of symptoms: from organs of more importance to those of less importance? from deeper to more superficial aspects of the individual? from the top downwards?	-	0	-
7. Did “old symptoms” (defined as non-seasonal and non-cyclical symptoms that were previously thought to have resolved) reappear temporarily during the course of improvement?	-	0	-
8. Are there alternate causes (other than the medicine) that—with a high probability— could have caused the improvement? (Consider known course of disease, other forms of treatment, and other clinically relevant interventions)	-	+1	-
9. Was the health improvement confirmed by any objective evidence? (e.g., laboratory test, clinical observation, etc.)	+2	-	-
10. Did repeat dosing, if conducted, create similar clinical improvement?	-	0	-
Total score= +8 (Maximum score = +13, minimum score = -6)			

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Fig.1: Vitiligo before treatment

Fig.2: Repertorization sheet

Repertorisation Sheet - Zomeo Pro

Remedy	Sil	Phos	Ars	Lyc	Nit ac	Nux v	Merc	Sulph	Calc	Sep	Hep	Psor	Alum	Kali c	Carb an
Totality	22	18	17	17	17	17	16	16	16	16	15	15	14	14	13
Symptoms Covered	8	8	7	7	7	6	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
[Kent] [Mind] Obstinate:	2	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	3	0	2	2	3	2	1
[Kent] [Stomach] Desires: Cold: Food:	2	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
[Kent] [Perspiration] Profuse:	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	1	3	3
[Kent] [Perspiration] Odour: Offensive:	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	0	3	3	2	0	1	3
[Kent] [Generalities] Heat: Vital, lack of:	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	3	3	2	3	3
[Kent] [Rectum] Constipation (see inactivity):	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	1	2	3	2	2
[Kent] [Generalities] Cold: Tendency to take:	3	2	1	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	0
[Kent] [Skin] Discoloration White: Spots:	3	2	3	0	1	0	2	2	2	2	0	0	2	0	1

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Fig.3: Vitiligo during treatment

Fig.4: Vitiligo resolved after treatment

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Fig.5: VIS-22 score before treatment

Vitiligo Impact Scale-22 (VIS-22): Pre-treatment assessment

This questionnaire is meant to measure the effect of vitiligo on your life. Please read every question carefully and answer them according to the best of your understanding.

0- Not at a, 1- A little 2- A lot 3- Very much

		0	1	2	3
1	Do you think this disease is incurable		1		
2	Do you change your doctor		1		
3	Do suggestions and advice from others about the disease bother you			2	
4	Do other people feel that this disease spreads by touch				3
5	Do you have problems in wearing your choice of clothes		1		
6	Do you feel helpless		1		
7	Do you face difficulties in adhering to the treatment		1		
8	Do your parents keep asking you to seek treatment	0			
9	Do you feel life is not worth living with this disease		1		
10	Do you feel depressed		1		
11	Do you keep thinking about this disease			2	
12	Have you stopped/reduced going to parties/get-togethers		1		
13	Do your friends/relatives avoid you			2	
14	Do you think about bringing your life to an end		1		
15	Do you observe any kind of dietary restriction			2	
16	Does the amount of money you have spent on treatment bother you		1		
17	Do you believe that this is worst disease anyone can have			2	
18	Do you get embarrassed when meeting people			2	
19	How worried will you be if you develop new lesions				3

If you are married, please answer the following question

20	Do your in-laws worry about your white patches			2	

If you are unmarried, please answer the following question

20	Are you facing problems in getting married	-	-	-	-

If you are working, please answer the following questions

21	Do your colleagues treat you differently because of the disease			2	

If you are studying, please answer the following questions

22	Do your classmates treat you differently because of the disease	-	-	-	-

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Fig.6: VIS-22 score after treatment

Vitiligo Impact Scale-22 (VIS-22): Post-treatment assessment

This questionnaire is meant to measure the effect of vitiligo on your life. Please read every question carefully and answer them according to the best of your understanding.

0- Not at a, 1- A little 2- A lot 3- Very much

		0	1	2	3
1	Do you think this disease is incurable	0			
2	Do you change your doctor	0			
3	Do suggestions and advice from others about the disease bother you	0			
4	Do other people feel that this disease spreads by touch	0			
5	Do you have problems in wearing your choice of clothes	0			
6	Do you feel helpless	0			
7	Do you face difficulties in adhering to the treatment	0			
8	Do your parents keep asking you to seek treatment	0			
9	Do you feel life is not worth living with this disease	0			
10	Do you feel depressed	0			
11	Do you keep thinking about this disease	0			
12	Have you stopped/reduced going to parties/get-togethers	0			
13	Do your friends/relatives avoid you	0			
14	Do you think about bringing your life to an end	0			
15	Do you observe any kind of dietary restriction	0			
16	Does the amount of money you have spent on treatment bother you	0			
17	Do you believe that this is worst disease anyone can have	0			
18	Do you get embarrassed when meeting people	0			
19	How worried will you be if you develop new lesions	0			

If you are married, please answer the following question

20	Do your in-laws worry about your white patches	0			

If you are unmarried, please answer the following question

20	Are you facing problems in getting married	-	-	-	-

If you are working, please answer the following questions

21	Do your colleagues treat you differently because of the disease	0			

If you are studying, please answer the following questions

22	Do your classmates treat you differently because of the disease	-	-	-	-

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