

Determine the factors influencing people's attitude and trends towards homeopathic mode of treatment in comparison with allopathic treatment

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Abstract:

Objective: To determine the factors influencing people's attitude and trends towards homeopathic mode of treatment.

Methodology: This cross sectional descriptive study was conducted in different homeopathic clinics of districts Multan, Bahawalpur and Lahore in duration of January 2017 to February 2017. Data collection was done by interviewing the patients and patients reply was translated into English and questionnaire was filled by the researcher himself. Collected data was entered on computer software SPSS version 23 and analyzed frequencies and percentages. Chi square test was applied to see effect modification and calculation of P value (≤ 0.05 significant).

Results: Overall 766 patients were included in this study, both genders. Gender distribution showed that there were 46.6% (n=357) males and 53.4% (n=409) females. In our study, it was observed that 86.3% (n=661) patients preferred homeopathy while 13.7% (n=105) patients preferred allopathic. It was noted that, out of 100% (n=766) patients, 31.6% (n=242) patients used homeopathic at the first time. 94.1% (n=721) patients said that homeopathic treatment cured the disease. 60.4% (n=463) patients' entire family uses homeopathic treatment. 63.3% (n=485) patients were using any allopathic medicine simultaneously. It was found 13.7% study respondents preferred allopathic treatment and remaining 86.3% preferred homeopathic treatment.

Conclusion: Homeopathic mode treatment was preferred in Bahawalpur and its periphery.

Keywords: Attitude, Homeopathy, Allopathy.

Introduction:

Today not only allopathic mode of treatment but many other are also on top of the list, among these new inventions homeopathic is well known and accepted worldwide due its safety and almost equally effectiveness. Practice of this mode of treatment is also well established in the region^{1,2}. Homeopathic mod of treatment was 1st time used by German doctor "Samuel Hahnemann" about 200 years before. Base of homeopathy was "Laws of similar" as described by the de Samuel. This terminology means "homeopathy". Philosophy of his treatment method was that small doses that can relieve symptoms of diseases in those patients who have symptoms similar to those patients in which similar symptoms created by strong and potent doses of drug^{3,4}.

With the passage of time these laws modified as every individual is treated as a peculiar case in homeopathy mod of treatment⁵. Inventions and technical modifications in field of complimentary alternative medicine (CAM) are neither included in residency training nor they have proper teaching and training institutes in these days, so it is a gap for development of this treatment⁶. Currently about 70% of the developing countries in the world still dependant, relies and using Complimentary alternative medicine (CAM) therapies to cure their diseases on regular basis⁷. Now these days in Pakistan a large number of patients are using alternative treatment for every type of illness and disorders. The ratio of CAM users varies from area to are, according to economic status, facility to facility and severity of illness⁸. Common causes of CAM use in Pakistan are chronic diseases like cancer, cardiac diseases, diabetes, epilepsy, infertility, asthma, erectile dysfunction, Leucorrhoea, alopecia, liver and kidney diseases, constipation piles, infectious diseases like: breast abscess, syphilis, gonorrhoea, tuberculosis, hepatitis, dengue fever, viralwartz, eczema, leprosy and even different types of complex bone fractures and dislocations are also treated with CAM strategies. 9,10, 11, 12, Main cause of Cam use in Pakistan is high hope in Patients for their treatment and management plan.

As per recovery by treatment provides low cost of treatment which attract low income families¹³, false and fake claims and advertisement by the media and commercials, fake and unethical counselling by health care providers for surgery and treatment course, fear of drug side effects and psychological fears in patients received from their

family members and neighbors, positive word of mouth from known ones, religious myths and believes, effect of words of other influential persons and hospital staff recommendations¹⁴. other then these influential reasons lack of health system facilities administrative flaws and unavailability of equipment also the cause of peoples interest in CAM. Some other examples include failure of empirical therapy maltreatment/ under treatment, long duration of treatment leading towards patient frustration. Patient's internal fear of surgery because of lack of proper counselling by the physicians and lack of availability of female practitioners to facilitate the patients with female related disease like gynecological diseases^{14,15,16}.

This study explores the characteristics of patients and their gender influences for the use of homeopathic medicine, visiting both homeopathic and allopathic clinics hospitals/clinics.

Methodology:

This cross sectional descriptive study was conducted in different homeopathic clinics of districts Multan, Bahawalpur and Lahore in duration of January 2017 to February 2017. Total number 72 patients were selected from homeopathic clinics through convenient sampling method. Patients of both gender (male/female), visiting homeopathic clinics and adult age group were included in the study. Patients using herbal medicine and those who were not willing to give their data were excluded from the study. A predesigned questionnaire was distributed between patients and they were asked to fill within a week. Performa (questionnaire) consist of two parts (Part A and B), part about demographic bio data of patients and part about study related questions. After complete information and written consent patients were asked these questions in their mother language (Urdu, Punjabi and Saraiki). Patients reply was translated into English and questionnaire was filled by the researcher himself. Collected data was entered on computer software SPSS version 23 and analyzed frequencies and percentages. Chi square test was applied to see effect modification and calculation of P value (≤ 0.05 significant).

Results:

Overall 100% (n=766) patients were included in this study, both genders. Gender distribution showed that there were 46.6% (n=357) males and 53.4% (n=409) females. There were 16.7% (n=128) patients uneducated, 36.2% (n=277) primary, 33% (n=253) middle, 7.8% (n=60) higher and 6.3% (n=48) graduates. Majority of the patients had low income i.e. 70.8% (n=542) and 29.2% (n=224) had high income. (Table. 1).

In our study, it was observed that 86.3% (n=661) patients preferred homeopathy while 13.7% (n=105) patients preferred allopathic. (Table. 3). It was noted that, out of 100% (n=766) patients, 31.6% (n=242) patients used homeopathic at the first time. 94.1% (n=721) patients said that homeopathic treatment cured the disease. 60.4% (n=463) patients' entire family uses homeopathic treatment. 63.3% (n=485) patients were using any allopathic medicine simultaneously. 87.5% (n=670) patients took for any disease; from these 96.2% (n=737) used homeopathy vaccine. 21.7% (n=166) patients thought that there were any set back to homeopathy. 67.6% (n=518) patients thought that homeopathy was assessable. 87.2% (n=668) recommended homeopathy to others. 82.9% (n=635) patients suffered because of homeopathy. 9.3% (n=71) patients suffered because of allopathy. 26% (n=199) patients aware what homeopathic medicines are made up of. 56.8% (n=435) came by homeopathy. 67% (n=513) patients go for homeopathic treatment. (Table. 2).

No association was found between preference of homeopathic or allopathic and gender (p=0.664), education status (p=0.132), income level (p=0.146), used homeopathic at the first time, (p=0.623), homeopathy help to cure the disease (p=0.710), entire family uses homeopathy treatment (p=0.753), allopathic medicine simultaneously (p=0.325), took vaccine for any disease (p=0.559), any set back to homeopathy (p=0.847), recommended homeopathy to others (p=0.280), suffered because of homeopathy (p=0.585), suffered because of allopathic (p=0.646), aware of homeopathic medicine made up of (p=0.863), prefer homeopathy (p=0.159), came by homeopathy (0.354), normally go for homeopathic treatment (p=0.943), except vaccine is homeopathic or allopathic (p=0.001) and homeopathic is more assessable (p=0.043). (Table.1-2). At the end of study it was found 13.7% study respondents preferred allopathic treatment and remaining 86.3% preferred homeopathic treatment.

Table. 1
Demographic Variables

| Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Test of Sig. |
|----------------------|------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| Gender | | | |
| Male | 357 | 46.6 | $\chi^2=0.189$ p=0.664 |
| Urban | 409 | 53.4 | |
| Total | 766 | 100.0 | |
| Education | | | |
| Un-educated | 128 | 16.7 | $\chi^2=7.075$ p=0.132 |
| Primary | 277 | 36.2 | |
| Middle | 253 | 33.0 | |
| Higher | 60 | 7.8 | |
| Graduate | 48 | 6.3 | |
| Total | 766 | 100.0 | |
| Income Status | | | |
| Low | 542 | 70.8 | $\chi^2=2.114$ p=0.146 |
| High | 224 | 29.2 | |
| Total | 766 | 100.0 | |

Table. 2: Questioner based percentages

| Question | Frequency | Percentage (%) | Test of Sig. |
|---|-----------|----------------|----------------------------|
| First time homeopathic | 242 | 31.6 | $\chi^2=0.241$ p=0.623 |
| Did homeopathy help you cure the disease | 721 | 94.1 | $\chi^2=0.138$ p=0.710 |
| Does your Entire family uses homeopathic treatment | 463 | 60.4 | $\chi^2=0.099$ p=0.753 |
| Are you using any Allopathic medicine simultaneously?' | 485 | 63.3 | $\chi^2=0.970$ p=0.325 |
| Have you taken vaccine for any disease? | 670 | 87.5 | $\chi^2=0.341$ p=0.559 |
| Was the vaccine homeopathic or allopathic? | 737 | 96.2 | $\chi^2=10.998$ p=0.001 |
| Do You think there are any setbacks to homeopathy?' | 166 | 21.7 | $\chi^2=0.037$ p=0.847 |
| Which is more accessible? Homeopathy or allopathic? | 518 | 67.6 | $\chi^2=4.088$ p=0.043 |
| Would You recommend homeopathy to others?' | 668 | 87.2 | $\chi^2=1.166$ p=0.280 |
| Have you suffered because of homeopathy? | 635 | 82.9 | $\chi^2=0.298$ p=0.585 |
| Have you suffered because of Allopathic? | 71 | 9.3 | $\chi^2=0.211$ p=0.646 |
| Are you aware what homeopathic medicines are made up of?' | 199 | 26 | $\chi^2=0.030$ p=0.863 |
| How did you come by homeopathy?' | 435 | 56.8 | $\chi^2=0.860$ p=0.354 |

| | | | |
|---|-----|----|-----------------------------|
| When do you normally go for homeopathic treatment?' | 513 | 67 | $\chi^2=0.005$ $p=0.943$ |
|---|-----|----|-----------------------------|

Table. 3
Outcome

| Preference | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------------|------------|----------------|
| Allopathic | 105 | 13.7 |
| Homeopathic | 661 | 86.3 |
| Total | 766 | 100.0 |

Discussion:

A large number of patients visiting homeopathic clinics, among them most patients were female and married. Similar findings were shown in many previous studies conducted by Jacobs J et al¹⁷, Witt CM et al¹⁸ and Steinsbekk A et al¹⁹. People are visiting these homeopathic clinics for a wide range of diseases including reproductive health. Homeopathy is a safe mode of treatment and has lot of inventions and research based diagnosis and treatment modifications in present era. Though in some cases CAM therapies have shown benefits in soothing acute as well as chronic disorders .it is strappingly assumed that these therapies show their effects of healing through their stimulus on the immune system of human body²⁰. However in, Pakistan , there is a lack of substantial evidence regarding the believes and concepts of homeopathic treatment among general populations. In our study majority of the patients had low income i.e. 70.8% (n=542) and 29.2% (n=224) had high income. A similar study was conducted in Bangladesh and reported that majority of people have income less than 15000/month, results of our study and this Bangladeshi study shows that middle and lower middle class people in south Asian region visits homeopathic method of treatment²¹. Expense and cost of medicine is the main consideration and large proportion of study participants using homeopathic medicine due to cost effectiveness. In Germany a large study was conducted on homeopathic mod of treatment and found 95% of cases using due to their chronic illness¹⁸.

Global overview of the world shows a makeable increase in homeopathic use was found, in United States within seven years about five hundred percent patients were increased at homeopathic clinics and sale of homeopathic medicine also increased²². In many studies published in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan also shows that there is a significant increase in homeopathic treatment along with allopathic treatment regimen. It was also reported that homeopathic medicine is beneficial in both acute and chronic cases²³.

The potential limitation of the result from the present study might include reverse causality, which is a frequent interpretation from results of cross-sectional study. In our study 21.7% (n=166) patients thought that there were any set back to homeopathy and 87.2% (n=668) recommended homeopathy to others. Similar findings were found in two past studies, one conducted in Karachi which shows 72% patients consulted homeopathic practitioner on others recommendations and study was conducted on Indian population which concluded that majority of patients' visits homeopathic clinics due to family pressure and on advice of friends^{24,25}. Many other variables also included in our study like homeopathic at the first time?, disease type for which medicine was used, Have you suffered because of Allopathic?, duration of homeopathic treatment which are not discussed and assessed in previous studies.

Conclusion: At the end of study it was found 13.7% study respondents preferred allopathic treatment and remaining 86.3% preferred homeopathic treatment. Homeopathic mod treatment was preferred in Bahawalpur and its periphery.

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