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EFFICACY OF HOMEOPATHIC REMEDIES IN REDUCING ANXIETY SYMPTOMS: A RANDOMIZED CONTROLLED TRIAL

Dr. Rajeshwar Pratap Singh*

Assistant Professor, Department of Environmental Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.

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ABSTRACT

Anxiety disorders are among the most prevalent psychiatric conditions, often impairing daily functioning, social interactions, and overall quality of life. Conventional pharmacotherapy can be associated with side effects, prompting interest in alternative treatments such as homeopathy. This randomized controlled trial evaluates the efficacy of individualized homeopathic remedies in reducing anxiety symptoms compared to placebo. Eighty participants diagnosed with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) according to DSM-5 criteria were randomized into Homeopathy Group (HG, n=40) and Placebo Group (PG, n=40). Interventions lasted 8 weeks. Outcomes were measured using Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A), Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item (GAD-7) scale, and patient-reported quality of life (QoL) scores. Post-intervention, the HG showed significant reductions in HAM-A scores (mean reduction: 12.5 ± 3.1 vs. 6.2 ± 2.7, $p<0.001$) and GAD-7 scores (HG: 10 ± 3 vs. PG: 4 ± 2, $p<0.01$). Findings suggest individualized homeopathic treatment may effectively reduce anxiety symptoms and improve QoL, offering a complementary approach for managing mild-to-moderate anxiety disorders.

INTRODUCATION

Anxiety disorders are characterized by excessive worry, apprehension, and physiological symptoms such as palpitations, restlessness, and sleep disturbances. Global prevalence of anxiety disorders has been increasing, significantly affecting functional performance, occupational productivity, and social well-being. Conventional treatments include pharmacotherapy (e.g., benzodiazepines, SSRIs) and cognitive-behavioral therapy. However, adverse effects and treatment resistance motivate research into alternative and complementary interventions, including homeopathy.

Homeopathy, a system of individualized medicine based on the principle of "like cures like," uses highly diluted substances to stimulate the body's self-healing mechanisms. Several clinical trials have reported improvements in anxiety, stress, and psychosomatic symptoms with individualized homeopathic remedies, though robust evidence remains limited. This study aims to assess the efficacy of homeopathic remedies versus placebo in reducing anxiety symptoms in patients with generalized anxiety disorder.

Corresponding Author
Dr. Rajeshwar Pratap Singh

Methodology Study Design

Randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled trial over 8 weeks.

Participants

Inclusion criteria: Adults aged 18–50 years diagnosed with GAD (DSM-5), HAM-A ≥18.
Exclusion criteria: Severe psychiatric comorbidities, substance abuse, ongoing pharmacotherapy for anxiety, pregnancy, or chronic medical conditions.

Sample Size

80 participants randomized:

Homeopathy Group (HG): n=40
Placebo Group (PG): n=40

Intervention
Homeopathy Group (HG):
Individualized remedies selected by a certified homeopath based on totality of symptoms
Oral administration, 3–5 globules per dose, frequency as prescribed
Follow-up every 2 weeks for remedy adjustment

Placebo Group (PG):
Identical sugar globules administered in same schedule
No active homeopathic substances
Follow-up every 2 weeks for assessment

Outcome Measures
Hamilton Anxiety Rating Scale (HAM-A)
Clinician-rated anxiety assessment

GAD-7 Scale: Self-reported anxiety severity
Quality of Life (QoL): WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire
Adverse Effects: Patient-reported events

Statistical Analysis
Paired t-tests for within-group comparisons,
Independent t-tests for between-group comparisons,
Significance: $p < 0.05$.

Case Study
Participant A: 28-year-old female in HG. Baseline HAM-A: 28; GAD-7: 14. Post-intervention: HAM-A: 15; GAD-7: 6. Reported improved sleep, reduced restlessness, and better daily functioning.
Participant B: 32-year-old male in PG. Baseline HAM-A: 26; GAD-7: 13. Post-intervention: HAM-A: 20; GAD-7: 9. Mild improvement in anxiety noted, primarily due to placebo effect.

Data Analysis
Table 1: Anxiety Scores Pre- and Post-Intervention

Group	HAM-A Pre	HAM-A Post	GAD-7 Pre	GAD-7 Post
HG	27 ± 3	14 ± 3	13 ± 2	3 ± 2
PG	26 ± 3	20 ± 3	13 ± 3	9 ± 2

Table 2: Quality of Life and Adverse Events

Group	QoL Pre (0–100)	QoL Post (0–100)	Adverse Events
HG	55 ± 8	78 ± 7	2 mild nausea
PG	56 ± 7	62 ± 6	1 mild headache

Questionnaire
Patient Survey (n=80):
1. Did your anxiety symptoms improve post-intervention? (Yes/No)
2. Did you experience improved sleep quality? (Yes/No)
3. Did you feel more confident managing daily stressors? (Yes/No)
4. Rate your overall satisfaction with treatment (Likert 1–5)
5. Would you consider homeopathy for future anxiety management? (Yes/No)

Homeopath/Clinician Survey (n=5):
1. Were individualized remedies effective in reducing anxiety symptoms? (Yes/No)
2. Were patients compliant with dosing schedule? (Yes/No)
3. Did any adverse effects occur? (Yes/No)
4. Was the follow-up frequency adequate? (Likert 1–5)
5. Recommendations for integrating homeopathy into anxiety management (Open-ended)

DISCUSSION

The study demonstrates that individualized homeopathic remedies significantly reduce anxiety symptoms and improve quality of life compared to placebo. HAM-A and GAD-7 scores showed greater reductions in the homeopathy group, highlighting potential efficacy in mild-to-moderate anxiety disorders. Homeopathy may exert effects through individualized holistic approaches, placebo-mediated mechanisms, and self-regulatory physiological responses. While both groups reported improvements, the magnitude of change in the homeopathy group suggests a specific therapeutic effect beyond placebo.

CONCLUSION

Individualized homeopathic treatment effectively reduces anxiety symptoms, improves quality of life, and is well-tolerated with minimal adverse effects. Homeopathy may serve as a complementary or alternative approach in managing mild-to-moderate anxiety disorders, though further large-scale trials are warranted to confirm long-term benefits and mechanism of action.

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