

ROLE OF HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICINE IN TREATING CONSTIPATION IN CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Constipation is a common issue in the pediatric population, characterized by infrequent bowel movements, difficult stool evacuation, hard stool, or incomplete defecation. It can be reduced through dietary adjustments and increased water intake, but some cases require medical treatment due to colon absorption or slow muscular activity. Currently, conventional treatment for chronic constipation has limited improvement in patient satisfaction. Homoeopathy, a holistic approach, is considered the most effective treatment for constipation. Homeopathy focuses on treating the person rather than the disease, focusing on the unique complaint picture the patient presents with, rather than the pathologically derived signs and symptoms. This approach acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and aims to provide a more effective solution for the condition.

Key words: Constipation, children, stool, treatment

INTRODUCTION

Constipation is the term described as either infrequent bowel movements, difficult evacuation of stool, hard stool or a sensation of incomplete defecation.¹ Among the pediatric population, constipation is a common concern. It involves passing hard, dry stools or experiencing inconsistent bowel movements. Constipation can often be

greatly reduced by making little dietary adjustments and drinking more water.² However, there are some cases of childhood constipation that require medical treatment. Constipation can result from the colon absorbing too much water or from sluggish or slow muscular activity in the colon, which allows the stool to pass through the colon too slowly. Stools may become hard and dry as a result.

Presently, there is only limited improvement in patient satisfaction with the conventional forms of available treatment. In a survey of people who suffer from chronic constipation, about 47% of

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participants said they were unhappy with the way they were currently being treated for the condition; 50% said eating more fiber did not make them feel better, 44% said over-the-counter laxatives did not make them feel better, and 50% said prescription laxatives did not make them feel better.³

Here comes the role of homoeopathy for the effective treatment of constipation. Homeopathy recognizes the notion that each individual is unique. It employs a holistic approach in its therapeutic practice, aims to treat the person rather than the disease, and thus treatment is not based on the expectation of pathologically derived signs and symptoms, but instead on the patient's unique way of experiencing the disharmony, which is the unique complaint picture they present with.^{4,5}

CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS

The factors that can lead to childhood constipation are,

1. **Holding back stools-** Some children may resist the impulse to pass stools. It could be for a variety of reasons, such as a desire not to take a break from playing or a dislike of using public restrooms while traveling. Certain kids might even hold the stool if they have had a traumatic experience passing firm and unpleasant stools.
2. **Improper toilet training-** If parents start toilet training at a young age, their kid may hold stools to protest. With time, this deliberate choice to hold stools may become an instinctive habit that is difficult to overcome.
3. **Dietary changes-** Constipation can occur if the youngster does not drink enough water or eat enough fiber-rich vegetables and fruits. When toddlers transition from a liquid to a solid diet, they are more likely to have constipation.

4. Allergy to cow's milk-

Constipation can be caused by consuming excess amounts of dairy products such as cow's milk and cheese, as well as having a cow's milk allergy.

5. Any change in routine of the child such as stress, hot weather, travel etc.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Passing stools below three times each week.
- Dry, lumpy, hardened stools.
- Difficulty or acute pain with bowel motions.
- Cramps or abdominal pain
- Distended abdomen
- Nausea

Constipation in kids is common but not serious. Chronic constipation can cause anal fissures, rectum collapse, and fecal impaction, potentially leaking stool out.

MANAGEMENT

1. **Aethusa-** Most intractable constipation, with the sensation that all bowel activity has been lost; intolerance to milk; pain and soreness in hypochondria. Constipation due to lactose intolerance.⁶
2. **Alumina-** This homeopathy remedy causes difficulty passing stool without desire, nausea, faintness, and inactivity of the rectum. Soft stools require straining, and stools can be dry, hard, knotty, or soft. Children with dry, hard, inflamed, and bleeding rectums may experience constipation. Both dryness and inactivity cause difficulty expelling soft stools.⁷
3. **Bryonia alba-** Constipation is caused by difficulty in mucus membrane secretion, resulting in

dry, and hard stools. It can cause excessive thirst, white-coated tongue, and difficulty expelling stools due to intestine atony. When home, they want to be out and when out, they want to be home.⁷

4. **Calcarea carb-** Homeopathic medicine is effective for children experiencing constipation, looking like lumps of chalk during dentition period, large, hard, whitish, watery, sour stool, and diarrhea of undigested food. The symptoms include a ravenous appetite, a burning, stinging hemorrhoids, and a hard, pasty, and liquid stool.^{6,7}
5. **Lycopodium-** This homeopathy remedy addresses impaired digestion, hard stools, flatulence, abdominal pain, and itching in the anus. It causes constipation due to rectum constriction, not irregular intestinal action. It is useful for young children with constipation and is often associated with hemorrhoids. It also causes constricted feelings around the rectum, similar to Silicea.^{6,7}
6. **Natrum Mur-** This homeopathic medicine causes constipation due to rectum inactivity, obstinate constipation, excessive perspiration, hard, difficult-to-expel stools, bleeding, smarting, soreness, dryness, crumbly stools, and intestinal weakness.⁶
7. **Nux vomica-** Nux vomica is a condition characterized by hard and difficult stool, frequent urges to pass stool without evacuation, and constipation. It is suitable for children who are independent, frustrated by developmental hurdles, or have developed constipation due to allopathic medications like antibiotics or painkillers, who often have a frequent but ineffectual urge for stools.⁷
8. **Opium-** Opium is a homeopathic remedy for constipation, causing long-standing cases, inactive rectum, dry mucus membrane, fecal retention, abdominal heaviness, fear, and chronic lead poisoning. It impacts feces into hard, dry, black balls, causing no stool urge, complete loss of consciousness, and apoplectic state.⁷
9. **Silicea-** This homeopathy remedy is effective for constipation in infants and children, causing large, hard lumps in the rectum that require mechanical removal. The remedy causes paralysis of the rectum, painful sphincter spasms, difficulty in stool removal, straining, and constipation. It also causes abdominal pain, bloating, colic symptoms, and swelling of the inguinal glands.^{6,7}

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