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The effects of individualized homeopathy in patients with chronic musculoskeletal pain: A randomized clinical trial

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Background: Chronic musculoskeletal pain is often associated with comorbidity, long-term disability and reduced quality of life. Current treatments only modestly reduce pain, disability, and distress. Homeopathy is increasingly used in pain conditions in general practice but scientific evidence is lacking. We therefore designed a clinical trial in a way that would not change the practice pattern of homeopathic physicians. The purpose of the study was to explore effects of an individualised homeopathy treatment on pain symptoms and quality of life of patients with chronic musculoskeletal pain.

Method: Study was pragmatic, randomised controlled trial with single blind assessment. Ninety patients aged 18-60, referred to a specialist pain clinic in Jaipur, India, were randomized to Homeopathy or control. Outcome variables were pain, and overall health related quality of life. All the patients had assessment at baseline, 3 months and 12 months.

Results: Significant improvements were reported in Homeopathy group, including pain, and improved functioning ability at 3 and 12 months, where Homeopathy group improved faster in 3 months. After 3 months, significant difference favouring Homeopathy were found in Mental symptoms (anxiety ($p<0.001$), depression ($p<0.01$), and functioning ability ($p<0.001$)) and overall quality of life ($p<0.0001$). At follow up of 12 months, the Homeopathy group reported less use of health services and better self-evaluated capability of coping with complaints and they took better care of their own health, compared to the control group.

Conclusion: Significant meaningful difference was found with Homeopathy intervention in patients with chronic musculoskeletal pain.

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