

## *Efficacy of Homoeopathic Remedies for Constipation in School Going Children and Understanding Their Diet Pattern*

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Constipation is a common complaint in clinical practice and usually refers to persistent, difficult, infrequent, or seemingly incomplete defecation. Irregular breakfast intake and skipping of breakfast is seen in constipated children. Childhood constipation is much more frequent when dietary fiber intake is restricted.

**Objective:** To bring out the effectiveness of homoeopathy in the treatment of constipation among school going children. To give treatment in the early stages to avoid further complications. To implicate the dietary management among the affected children.

**Materials & Methods:** A study was done at Sarada Krishna Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital in 15 school going children of either sex suffering from constipation were taken into consideration. They were assessed using the modified constipation assessment scale.

**Results:** It was verified that Homoeopathic medicines along with dietary implications are effective in the management of Constipation. 15 cases were selected from OPD & IPD of SKHMCH. Diet related questionnaire was useful to assess the cause of constipation. The cases were analyzed on the basis of Modified constipation assessment scale. The pre and post assessment scoring was done. Constipation is mostly distributed in the age group 6-17 years of age, mainly 6 years of age.

**Conclusion:** Constipation continues to be a problem mostly in school going children age group. Skipping breakfast, inadequate consumption of healthy food and water are the main reasons for constipation in children.

**Keywords:** Constipation, Bowel habits, Diet pattern, Homoeopathic, Remedies.

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### **Introduction**

"Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are."<sup>[1]</sup> -Anthelme Brillat Savarin (1825).

Constipation is a symptom, not a disease.

Constipation is a common complaint in clinical practice and usually refers to persistent, difficult, infrequent, or seemingly incomplete

defecation. Most of the persons have at least three bowel movements per week; however, low frequency alone is not the sole criterion for diagnosis of constipation. Many constipated persons have a normal frequency of defecation but complain of excessive straining, hard stools, lower abdominal fullness, or sense of incomplete evacuation. According to Araujo et al and Ip et al found that dietary intake was insufficient in all children. There is also decrease in intake of water in constipated children.



Figure 1<sup>[4]</sup>

The incidence of constipation is more in children who consume junk food that includes fried and baked items. <sup>[2]</sup> A Pediatric gastroenterologist says, "In any school, nearly 40% of children suffer from constipation and the primary reason is a lifestyle." It is also said that children eat too much processed and carbohydrate-rich food and don't drink enough water. <sup>[3]</sup>

### Aims and Objectives:

1. To bring out effectiveness of homoeopathy in the treatment of constipation among school going children.
2. To give treatment in the early stages to avoid further complications.
3. To implicate dietary management among the affected children.

**Causes:** Pathophysiologically, chronic constipation generally results from inadequate fiber or fluid intake or disordered colonic transit or anorectal function. These result from neurogastroenterologic disturbance, certain drugs, advancing age, or in association with a

large number of systemic diseases that affect the gastrointestinal tract. Other etiology includes.

- ❖ Metabolic and Endocrine causes
- ❖ Dietary causes
- ❖ Conditions associated with neurogenic constipation
- ❖ Diseases of large intestine <sup>[5]</sup>

The normal frequency of stools varies from 3 times per day to 3 times per week. But this may be as high as 4-10 times during the breast-feeding period in infancy. Toddlers may pass stools 3-5 times per day but as the age advances the transit time increases and normal adulthood frequency of 1-2 times per day is achieved after 4 years of age.

**Philosophical Background:** In Organon of medicine, Dr. Samuel Hahnemann - 5th & 6th edition, Introduction; Hahnemann quotes in Aphorism 4- "He is likewise a preserver of health if he knows the things that derange health and cause disease, and how to remove them from persons in health."

It is the duty of a Physician to make children aware of a healthy diet, the importance of breakfast, and fluid intake. Only if he knows and if he makes his patients aware of the improper diet that ends in disease, he will be able to remove disease from a person and maintain health.

Lesser Accessory symptoms in Aphorism 95- Some symptoms may have become habitual to patients. They consider them to be a part of their own life and not a symptom at all. <sup>[6]</sup>

**Diet:** Eat at regular meal times. Constipation can happen if you snack lots instead of eating at regular meal times. Drink plenty of water, squash and fruit juice (6 – 8 glasses a day). Drinking just before you eat will reduce your appetite, so try to drink after meals rather than before. For children who find it difficult to increase the amount they drink, try to include foods that contain a high fluid level such as gravy, sauces and soup. Avoid excessive milk consumption as children can fill up easily with milk resulting in a poor dietary intake. <sup>[7]</sup>

## Methodology

**Study Settings:** A Sample of 15 cases presenting with constipation obtained from OPD and IPD of Sarada Krishna Homoeopathic medical college hospital, Kulasekharam, was selected for the study.

## Selection of Samples:

Sample Size- 15 Cases

Sample Technique- Purposive sampling.

## Inclusion Criteria:

- Children of 6- 17 years of age.
- Children of both sexes are included.

## Exclusion Criteria:

- Children with other systemic illness.
- Children under regular medication.

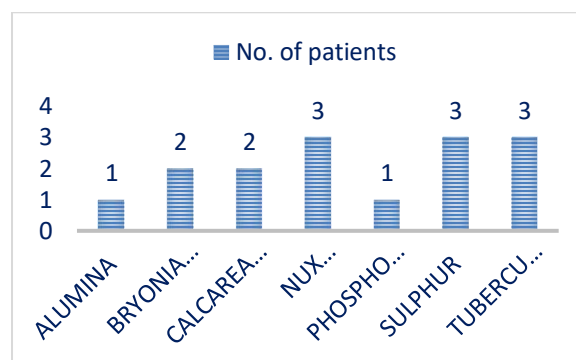
## Method of Study:

- ❖ A study of constipation in school going children and its homoeopathic management.
- ❖ Detailed case taking was done.
- ❖ Data was obtained from patients, bystanders, Physician's observation and physicle xamination according to pre-structured SKHMC case record.
- ❖ Further questioning about their diet pattern in order to assess the cause.
- ❖ Medicine selection was done based on totality of symptoms according to the reference with standard textbook of Materia medica.
- ❖ Potency and dose was selected based on the principles of Organ on of medicine.
- ❖ Pre and Post assessment was done based on Modified Constipation Assessment Scale.
- ❖ Patient is followed after one to two months of prescription and the Modified Constipation Assessment Scale was repeated for Post analysis.

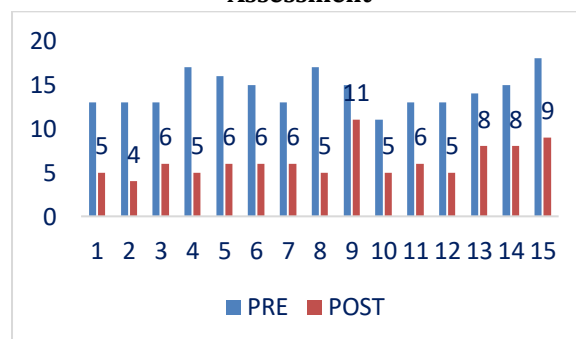
## Observation and Results:

### Distribution of Cases Based on Medicines Prescribed:

Based on this study, Alumina and Phosphorus were prescribed to 1 patient, Bryonia alba, and Calcarea carbonica to 2 patients, Nux vomica, Sulphur, and Tuberculinum was prescribed to 3 patients respectively.



### Distribution of Cases Based on Their Pre and Post Assessment



### Statistical Interpretation: t-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means

Description	Pre	Post
Mean	14.4	6.3333
Variance	3.82857	3.52381
Observations	15	15
Pearson correlation	0.35004177	
df	14	
t Stat	14.28836487	
P (T <=t) two tail	9.66479E - 10	
t Critical two tail	2.144786688	

The study is found statistically significant at p 0.05% level.

**Discussion:** This study is mainly focused on the efficiency of Homoeopathic treatment for constipation in school-going children. During the study, there were about 40 patients suffering from constipation and 15 patients were selected based on inclusion criteria. Constipation was more common in adolescent children's age groups during the study. From the observations recorded in the study, some of the findings evolved are as under:

**Age:** Constipation is more common in children. According to the study, the maximum number of patients affected belongs to 6 years of age 9(60%), followed by 9 years of age 3(20%).

**Sex:** According to this study, boys (8cases) are affected more than girls.

**Etiological Factors:** In this study, among 15 patients, 3 of them skip their breakfast most of the time, 7 of them skip their breakfast at times and 5 of them skip their breakfast rarely.

Also, about 1 patient eats breakfast fully, 13 of them eat only half and 2 of them eat very little. So, skipping breakfast and irregular breakfast intake is observed in constipated children.

Among 15 patients, every 5 of them prefer cakes, fried chips, and fruits. Also, about 2 patients drink 2 liters of water per day, about 12 of the patients drink up to 1 liter of water per day and about 1 patient drink less than 500mL of water per day.

## Conclusion

1. Constipation is mostly distributed in the age group 6-17 years, mainly 6 years of age.
2. Skipping breakfast, inadequate

consumption of food and water are the main reasons for constipation in children.

3. The application of Homoeopathic medicines on the basis of symptom similarity can improve the condition substantially.
4. Most frequently indicated remedies in this study are Nux vomica, Sulphur, Tuberculinum.

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