

Homeopathy for the Elderly: Safe and Effective Treatment for Osteoarthritis

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Osteoarthritis is a progressive joint degenerating disorder characterized by cartilage loss. It affects cartilage, subchondral bone, ligaments, menisci, synovium and joint capsule.^{[1][2]} Osteoarthritis is the most prevalent form of arthritis which is characterised by chronic pain and loss of mobility and the studies have shown that the onset of symptoms is usually after 40 years of age and with age the incidence of disease increases more rapidly in female as compares to male due to alteration in hormonal status.^[3]

According to the ICD-10 (International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision) (FA01.0), primary osteoarthritis is classified under the code M17. The diagnostic criteria for osteoarthritis are based on clinical presentation, radiographic findings, and exclusion of other conditions which are as follows:

- Pain: Chronic knee pain that worsens with activity (e.g., walking, climbing stairs) and improves with rest. Pain is typically persistent and lasts for 6 months or more.
- Stiffness: Morning stiffness lasting less than 30 minutes (usually a characteristic feature of osteoarthritis).
- Swelling: Occasional swelling or effusion (fluid accumulation) in the knee joint.
- Decreased Range of Motion: Limited mobility of the knee joint with difficulty fully extending or flexing the knee. Difficulty in performing functional activities (e.g., walking, squatting, climbing stairs).
- Crepitus: A feeling of grinding, popping, or creaking when moving the knee joint.

Moreover, Osteoarthritis can greatly reduce the quality of life. It makes movement painful and difficult, which can stop people from participating in home, work or social activities. This can lead to mental health impacts, trouble sleeping and problems in relationships.^[4]

Various researches and official publications have suggested that common drugs for osteoarthritis may have their own altered effects on individual presented as nausea, dyspepsia, anorexia, abdominal pain, flatulence, and diarrhoea. They may also increase risk for cardiovascular complications. In such conditions Homeopathy has to offer gentle and risk-free intervention through medicines with least toxicity. The process of preparation of homeopathic medicine makes them utmost risk free and safe for consideration.

The common homeopathic remedies beneficial for osteoarthritis patients along with their corresponding individualistic symptoms are as follows,^[5]

- Calcarea fluorica: Cracking in joints. Synovial swellings. Vivid and distinct dreams, with weeping. Indecision. Anxiety about money matters.
- Bryonia Alba: Rheumatic swelling of the r. shoulder and upper arm, with stitches. Tractive pains in the joints of the shoulders and of the arms, with tension, shootings, and shining red swelling. Shootings in the joints of the elbow, and of the hand, with heaviness of the hands. Tensive and painful stiffness of the knees. Red and shining swelling of the knees, with violent shootings, esp. on walking. Painful stiffness of the knees, with stitches, esp. when moving them.-Staggering and yielding of the knees, while walking.-Tensive shootings and cramp-like pains in the knees, with tension extending to the calves of the legs.-Sharp pains in the knees, extending to the tibia. Anxiety and inquieted, with fear of the future. Frequent tears. Despair of being cured, with fear of death. Restlessness, with fear of the future; fear of death, which he thinks is near. Fear, with desire to run away. Discouragement. Aversion to conversation.
- Rhus Toxicodendron: Swelling, stiffness, and paralysed sensations in joints, from sprains, over-lifting, or over-stretching. Lameness, stiffness, and pain on first moving after rest, or on getting up in

morning; > by constant motion. Trembling or sensation of trembling in limbs. The limbs on which he lies, esp. arms, go to sleep. Rheumatic tension, drawing, tearing in limbs, during rest. Excessively cold hands and feet all day. Anxious sadness and excessive anguish, esp. (at twilight) in evening and at night, with wish for solitude and inclination to weep. Restlessness which will not suffer the patient to remain seated.; and compels him to throw himself about in bed. Anguish with fear of death and sighs. Fear of being poisoned. Suicidal mania (desire to throw himself into the water). Irritability and ill-humour, with repugnance to labour. Moral dejection with anthropophobia. Helplessness and profound despondency

- Pulsatilla: Redness and swelling of joints, with stinging pains. Anxious, tremulous sensation in limbs. Drawing, sticking, < in joints, which are painful to touch. Weakness in limbs morning after rising, with relaxation without feeling weary. Drawing, tearing pains in limbs, shifting rapidly from place to place; < at night, from warmth; > from uncovering. Pain in limbs in morning in bed, < in joints, forcing him to stretch, with general heat. This remedy is particularly applicable for complaints which are found to occur in patients of a mild, yielding, or good-natured disposition; also, in those who by, their sickness, or naturally, are very easily excited to tears-they are very apt to burst into tears whenever spoken to, or when they attempt to speak, as in giving their symptoms, etc. Affections of the mind in general; covetous; mistrustful; absent-minded; low-spirited

- Rhododendron: Rheumatic and arthritic drawing and tearing as if in the periosteum of limbs, excited by rough weather and < by repose. Wrenching pain and searching drawings in joints, with redness and swelling. Chronic rheumatism affecting the smaller joints and their ligaments. Restlessness, tingling, weakness, and sensation of paralytic stiffness in some of the limbs.

However, it is not necessary that the prescription will be amongst these medicines only. The homeopathic prescriptions are based on individualistic, peculiar, strange and rare symptoms which are the chief guide for suitable remedy. The homeopathic prescription also considers emotional and mental aspect of an individual and hence different individual is suggested to take different remedy as per their constitution, mental make-up and sensitivity. The dose, potency

and repetition are based on susceptibility of an individual.^[6]

Hence Homeopathy offers safe, gentle and highly specific remedies for each individual considering peculiarities of diseases manifestation and mental make-up.

REFERENCES

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