

CASE REPORT

Fibromyalgia: A Report of 2 Cases Treated With Homeopathy

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ABSTRACT

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition that is characterized by widespread pain and a multitude of other symptoms, including fatigue, sleep disturbances, cognitive dysfunction, stiffness, and depressive episodes.

Fibromyalgia is most common in women, though it can occur in men as well. It most often starts in middle adulthood but can occur in the teen years and in old age.

Fibromyalgia has also been termed central pain amplification disorder, meaning the volume of pain sensation in the brain is turned up too high.

This study has been conducted to evaluate the role of homeopathic treatment in fibromyalgia, a chronic pain disorder which a physician may come across fairly commonly in their practice. Homeopathy has demonstrated great efficacy in mitigating the symptoms of widespread pain, sleep disturbance, and fatigue, which are the most commonly reported symptoms of fibromyalgia. (*Altern Ther Health Med.* 2022;28(5):60-64)

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INTRODUCTION

Fibromyalgia is a common chronic pain disorder with unknown etiology. Fibromyalgia may be difficult to diagnose as many physicians believe it to be a diagnosis of exclusion. Diagnosis is further made difficult by the fact that there are no abnormalities detected in laboratory investigations.

Although fibromyalgia is defined primarily as a pain syndrome; patients also commonly report associated neuropsychological symptoms of fatigue, sleep disturbances (waking unrefreshed), cognitive dysfunction, anxiety, and depression.¹ The prevalence of fibromyalgia in the general population of a community in the United States, using 1990 American College of Rheumatology classification criteria, was reported to be 3.4% in women and 0.5% in men. The prevalence increased with age, being 7.4% in women between the ages of 70 and 79. In clinical settings, a diagnosis of fibromyalgia is more common in women than in men, with a ratio of approximately 9:1. The prevalence data are similar across various socioeconomic classes.²

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This work includes 2 cases which were selected from the homeopathy outpatient department (OPD) at Dr D. Y. Patil Homoeopathic Medical College and Research Centre, Pune. The material includes 2 case records, both of which were taken according to the standardized homeopathic format.

Methodology

During the period 01/21/2020 to 04/03/2020, 2 patients with fibromyalgia attending the OPD were selected at random irrespective of their age, sex, socioeconomic status, and occupation. The suspected cases of fibromyalgia were selected on the basis of the clinical presentation of the patients.

Inclusion criteria consisted of: (1) both genders, and (2) patients suffering from chronic diffuse pain.

Exclusion criteria consisted of patients who were: (1) HIV positive, (2) HBsAg positive, and (3) pregnant and lactating.

The cases were recorded keeping the individualistic and holistic concepts in mind. The data was collected by questioning and physical examination of the patient, which included the following:

- Preliminary data
- Presenting complaint with duration in brief chronological order
- History of presenting complaint: the complaints along

with duration were recorded with special reference to onset, progress, and causative factors

- Past medical history, if any, in chronological order to determine the miasmatic background of the patient
- Personal history, including the generalities of the patient so that the patient could be considered as a whole, was recorded with special reference to mental reactions, desires and aversions, aggravation to any particular food, habits, appetite, thirst, bowel movements, and perspiration
- Family history in order to illuminate the miasmatic background of the patient for any diseases or disorders running in the family, inherited, or acquired

Case 1

Preliminary Data:

Name: Mrs. ABC

Age: 52 years

Sex: female

Marital status: married

Occupation: housewife

Date of case taking: 03/05/20

Chief Complaints:

(1) pain in bilateral calves since 3 months; pain aggravated on exertion and ameliorated by pressure, and (2) general weakness and fatigue.

ODP: The patient started with the complaint of pain in both calves 3 months prior to the date of examination. The pain is aggravated on exertion and ameliorated by pressure. The intensity of pain has gradually been increasing, but no new symptoms have been recorded.

Associated Complaints: None

Past History: No major illnesses

Family History:

Mother: hypertension; Father, husband, and son: nothing abnormal detected

Personal History:

Diet-mixed

Appetite-normal

Thirst-increased

Desire-nothing specific

Aversion-nothing specific

Habits-none

Bowels-no complaints

Urine-no complaints

Perspiration-on exertion

Thermals: CHILLY patient

Menstrual History: Achieved menopause 8 years prior

Local Examination: No calf tenderness, no discoloration

General Examination:

Pallor-absent

Icterus-absent

Edema-absent

Cyanosis-absent

Clubbing-absent

Lymphadenopathy-absent

Skin and nails-healthy

Systemic Examination:

a) Per abdomen

Inspection-no scar marks

Palpation-no tenderness

b) Cardiovascular system

S1 and S2 heard

c) Respiratory system

Inspection-chest bilaterally symmetrical

Palpation-tactile vocal fremitus normal

Percussion-resonant note heard

Auscultation-air entry bilaterally equal

d) Central nervous system

Conscious and well oriented

Mentals and Observations:

Patient physically restless

Differential Diagnosis:

1. Fibromyalgia
2. Deep venous thrombosis
3. Hypothyroidism

Investigations:

- Venography (nothing abnormal detected, regular blood flow, all major vessels visualized)
- D-dimer test (220 ng/mL) – normal range: (≤ 500 ng/mL)
- TFT (T3 = 100 ng/dL, T4 = 5 μ g/dL, TSH = 4.5 mIU/L)
Normal ranges: (T3 = 100-200 ng/dL, T4 = 4.5-11.2 μ g/dL, TSH = 0.5-5.0 mIU/L)

Provisional Diagnosis: Fibromyalgia

Hahnemannian Classification of Disease: Dynamic-Chronic-Disease with fully developed symptoms – Miasmatic – Psora.

Chronic Totality:

1. Pain in bilateral calves since 3 months
2. Pain aggravated on exertion
3. Pain ameliorated by pressure
4. Physically restless
5. General weakness and fatigue
6. Increased thirst

Repertory Used: Kent's Repertory

Reason for Repertory Used: General Repertory

Susceptibility: HIGH – No structural or irreversible changes, characteristic symptoms.

Remedy Selected: Arsenicum album

Potency: 200C

Prescription: Arsenicum album 200C BID (twice a day) \times 3 days

Sac lac, 4 pills BID X 14 days

Auxiliary Treatment: Apply hot compresses

Figure 1. Case 1 chart

Remedy	Calf pain 16%	Calf pain on motion 16%	Calf pain, pressure amelioration 16%	Extremities restlessness 16%	Weakness, enervation 16%	Thirst for small quantities 16%
Ars.	2	0	0	3	3	3
Rhus-t.	2	0	0	3	3	2
Lyc.	1	0	0	3	2	3
Nux-v.	2	2	0	3	2	0
Puls.	2	0	0	3	2	0
Tarent.	1	0	0	3	3	0
Sil.	1	0	0	3	3	0
Sulf.	1	0	0	0	3	2
Lach.	1	0	0	0	3	2
Cupr.	1	0	0	2	2	1
Calc.	3	0	0	0	3	0
Kali-br.	1	0	0	3	2	0
Iod.	1	0	0	2	3	0
Hell.	1	0	0	0	2	2
Merc-ir.	2	0	0	1	1	1
Cact.	2	0	0	0	2	1

Follow-Up:

1. Date: 03/20/2020 All complaints better. Pain in calves better by 60%. Fatigue and general weakness improved. Prescription: Sac lac 4 pills BID X 14 days
2. Date : 04/03/2020 All complaints better by 85%. Prescription: Sac lac 4 pills BID x 7 days

Modified Naranjo Criteria:

1. Was there an improvement in the main symptom or disease for which the homeopathic medicine was prescribed? +2
2. Did the clinical improvement occur within a plausible time period in relationship to drug use? +1
3. Was there an initial worsening of symptoms? 0
4. Do you feel an overall well-being? +1
5. Did some of the symptoms improve in reverse order of their appearance? +1
6. Does the effect cover more than the main symptom of the disease? +1
7. Direction of cure: • From organs of more importance to those of less importance • From deeper to more superficial aspects. • From top to bottom. +1
8. Did old symptoms temporarily reappear during the treatment? 0
9. Are there any alternative causes that – with a high probability – could have caused the improvement? 0
10. Did any test confirm the improvement in health? 0
11. Did repeating the dose, if carried out, produce similar clinical improvement +1

Total score: 8

Case 2

Preliminary Data:

Name: Mrs. XYZ
Age: 35 years
Sex: female
Marital status: married
Occupation: housewife
Date of case taking: 01/21/2020

Chief Complaint: Pain in right leg and right arm, throbbing type, since 3 months. < Exertion, > rest, movement.

ODP: The patient started with the complaint of a throbbing type of pain in right leg and right arm, which was aggravated by exertion and ameliorated by rest and movement, around 3 months prior to the date of case taking.

Associated Complaints: None

Past History: No major illnesses

Family History:

Mother: hypertension; Father, husband, and son: nothing abnormal detected

Personal History:

Diet–mixed
 Appetite–decreased since complaint
 Thirst–normal
 Desire–nothing specific
 Aversion–nothing specific
 Habits–none
 Urine–no complaints
 Bowels–no complaints
 Perspiration–only on exertion

Thermals: Hot patient

Figure 2. Case 2 chart

Remedy	Irritability 14%	Diminished appetite 14%	Right leg pain 14%	Right upper arm pain 14%	Limbs pain after slight exertion 14%	Motion amelioration 16%
Rhus-t.	3	1	0	0	2	3
Alum.	3	3	0	0	1	2
Lyc.	3	2	0	0	0	3
Aur.	3	2	0	0	0	3
Sulf.	3	1	0	0	1	3
Con.	2	2	0	0	1	3
Zinc.	3	1	0	0	1	2
Sep.	3	1	0	0	2	2
Coloc.	2	2	0	0	0	2
Nat-m.	3	1	0	0	2	0
Puls.	3	1	0	0	0	3
Kali-s.	3	1	0	0	0	3
Sabad.	2	2	0	0	0	3
Ferr.	2	2	0	0	0	3
Kali-c.	3	1	0	0	1	2
Nat-c.	3	1	0	0	1	2
Sil.	3	1	0	0	1	0
Mag-c.	3	0	0	0	1	2
Cina.	2	2	0	0	0	2

Menstrual History: no complaints

Local Examination: no edema, sensations normal

General Examination:

Pallor-absent

Icterus-absent

Edema-absent

Cyanosis-absent

Clubbing-absent

Lymphadenopathy-absent

Skin and nails-healthy

Systemic Examination:

a) Per abdomen

Inspection-no scar marks

Palpation-no tenderness

Percussion-tympanic notes heard

Auscultation-peristaltic sounds heard

b) Cardiovascular system:

S1 and S2 heard

c) Respiratory system:

Inspection-chest bilaterally symmetrical

Palpation-tactile vocal fremitus normal

Percussion-resonant note heard

Auscultation-air entry bilaterally equal

d) Central nervous system:

Conscious and well oriented

Mentals and Observations:

Irritable since complaint, expresses by shouting at others

Differential Diagnosis:

1. Fibromyalgia
2. Rheumatoid arthritis
3. Hypothyroidism

Investigations:

- TFT (T3 = 120 ng/dL, T4 = 5.3 µg/dL, TSH = 5 mIU/L)

Normal ranges: (T3 = 100-200 ng/dL, T4 = 4.5-11.2 µg/dL, TSH = 0.5-5.0 mIU/L)

- Rheumatoid factor (9 IU/mL), normal range : (0-20 IU/mL)
- Cyclic citrullinated peptide antibody test (CCPA – 18 EU/mL), normal range: (less than 20 units)

Provisional Diagnosis: Fibromyalgia

Hahnemannian Classification of Disease: Dynamic-Chronic-Disease with fully developed symptoms – Miasmatic – Psora

Chronic Totality:

1. Pain in right leg and right arm
2. Pain aggravated by exertion
3. Pain ameliorated by movement
4. Pain ameliorated by rest
5. Appetite decreased
6. Irritability increased, expressed by shouting

Repertory Used: Kent's Repertory.

Reason for Repertory Used: General Repertory

Susceptibility: High – No structural or irreversible changes, characteristic symptoms

Remedy Selected: Rhus toxicodendron - Irritability well marked, motion amelioration, limbs pain after slight exertion.

Potency: 200C

Prescription: Rhus toxicodendron 200C 4 pills TID (three times a day) × 3 days

Sac lac 4 pills BID × 14 days

Auxiliary Treatment: Avoid exertion and apply hot compresses

Follow-Up:

1. Date: 05/02/2020 All complaints better. Pain in leg and hand better by 70%.
Prescription: Sac lac BID 4 pills X 14 days
2. Date: 20/02/2020 All complaints better by 90%.
Prescription: Sac lac 4 pills BID X 7 DAYS

Modified Naranjo Criteria:

1. Was there an improvement in the main symptom or disease for which the homeopathic medicine was prescribed? +2
2. Did the clinical improvement occur within a plausible time period in relationship to drug use? +1
3. Was there an initial worsening of symptoms? 0
4. Do you feel an overall well-being? +1
5. Did some of the symptoms improve in reverse order of their appearance? +1
6. Does the effect cover more than the main symptom of the disease? +1
7. Direction of cure: From organs of more importance to those of less importance • From deeper to more superficial aspects. • From top to bottom. +1
8. Did old symptoms temporarily reappear during the treatment? 0
9. Are there any alternative causes that – with a high probability – could have caused the improvement? 0
10. Did any test confirm the improvement in health? 0
11. Did repeating the dose, if carried out, produce similar clinical improvement? +1

Total Score: 8

MONITORING AND RESULTS

The present study was carried out in 2 cases that satisfied the inclusion criteria to study the efficacy of homeopathy in the treatment of fibromyalgia; the outcome of the study is briefly discussed below.

1. In case 1, a 52-year-old female had complaints of pain in calves bilaterally since 3 months which was aggravated on exertion and ameliorated by pressure; the patient also had general weakness and fatigue with increased thirst. Generally a chilly patient who is physically restless. The patient was prescribed *Arsenicum album* and she showed improvement.
2. In case 2, a 35-year-old female was suffering from a throbbing type of pain in right arm and right leg since 3 months; the pain was aggravated on exertion and on movement and was ameliorated by rest. Also, the patient's appetite was reduced. Generally a hot patient, was very irritable and expressed her irritability by shouting at others. The patient was prescribed *Rhus toxicodendron* and she, too, showed improvement.

Both patients exhibited great improvement by the second follow-up.

DISCUSSION

Fibromyalgia is a chronic condition that is characterized by chronic widespread pain and many other symptoms, including fatigue, sleep disturbances, cognitive dysfunction, stiffness, and depressive episodes.¹ The conventional system of medicine has a limited scope in managing this disorder and is limited to the prescribing of analgesics and the advising of physiotherapeutic exercises.

Homeopathic remedies prescribed on the basis of symptom similarity has shown positive improvement in the pain management, as well as combating of associated symptoms of the disorder, with which the patients presented. A dose of the remedy arrived at through repertorization of the totality of symptoms has been shown to produce beneficial action in the patient by the second follow-up visit by up to 90%. The remedies used were *Rhus toxicodendron* and *Arsenicum album*, which were prescribed based on the totality of symptoms arrived at through individualization of the patients.

Unnecessary repetition of doses was avoided in both cases. Minimum doses were given, keeping in mind the principles of homeopathy.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has no conflicts of interest related to the study to disclose.

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