



ROLE OF HOMEOPATHIC MEDICINE IN TREATMENT OF ALCOHOL ADDICTION

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ABSTRACT: Being addicted to any kind is injurious but it's really becomes a very sensitive topic when we talk about alcoholism. Alcohol addiction causes deleterious effect on physical health, mental health, social health and even financial state. Alcohol abuse have a effective global burden on any country. It accounts for 18.4 million yrs of life lost due to disability¹. As alcohol excessive consumption leads to damage of various vital organs of our body resulting in disease condition like cirrhosis, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, intentional disease, unintentional disease etc. Over consumption of alcohol on regular basis makes a person vulnerable to many other addiction and diseases too. So there is a need for its prevention effectively on a wide range to diminish its craving and various homoeopathic medicines acts wonderfully in this regard in a very gentle mode.

KEYWORDS: Alcoholism, Addiction, Cirrhosis, Homoeopathic medicines, Health, Craving.

EPIDEMIOLOGY: According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), in 2015, 15.1 million American adults (6.2 percent of the population) had an alcohol use problem.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), globally, 3.3 million deaths every year result from the harmful use of alcohol².

INTRODUCTION: Alcoholism is an illness of the brain that causes a compulsion to drink through intense craving for alcohol. Alcohol addiction is made up of two elements: a physical addiction and a psychological addiction³.

ALCOHOL WITHDRAWAL⁴: There are changes that happen in the brain of someone who drinks a lot of alcohol which makes them having physical withdrawal symptoms if they don't drink. Alcohol causes central nervous system depression. As a result of alcohol use, the brain tries to maintain balance by using several mechanism to increase the neurons excitability. It also means that you need to consume more alcohol to achieve the same euphoric feeling. Some symptoms results after abstinence from prolonged and heavy alcohol drinking. Common Alcohol Withdrawal Symptoms are irritability, tremors, anxiety, sleep disturbances, Rapid heart rate, sweating, nausea, vomiting, headache, Heightened sensitivity to light and sound, Clamminess, Disorientation, Loss of appetite, vivid hallucinations.

❖ **SIGNS OF ALCOHOL ADDICTION**⁵: Some of the signs of alcohol dependence include:

- worrying about when you'll be able to have your next drink
- sweating, nausea or insomnia when you don't drink
- needing to drink more and more alcohol to get drunk
- drinking alcohol, or wanting to, when you wake up in the morning
- consuming alcohol regularly on your own, or trying to hide your drinking

- Dispute with friends and family about your drinking or going out⁶.
- “Blacking out” – drinking so much that the next day, you have no memory
- Neglecting important aspects of your life such as your relationships, work or education
- Rapid weight gain or loss
- Slow or staggering walk
- Inability to sleep or stay awake
- Unexplained bruises or marks
- Glazed or red eyes
- Cold, sweaty palms or shaking hands
- Puffy face, blushing or paleness
- Depressed or anxious
- Deterioration of personal appearance or hygiene⁷

Some sign of alcohol addiction are⁸:

- high tolerance for alcohol, or lack of “hangover” symptoms
- drinking at inappropriate times, such as first thing in the morning, or in places like church or work
- changes in friendships; someone with an alcohol addiction may choose friends who also drink heavily
- avoiding contact with loved ones
- dependence on alcohol to function in everyday life
- increased lethargy, depression, or other emotional issues
- professional problems such as an arrest or loss of a job.
- losing interest in hobbies that were previously enjoyed
- storing alcohol in unlikely places⁹
- Becoming dishonest or secretive, aggressive, moody, or temperamental—people who have an alcohol addiction will try to hide it¹⁰.

❖ **HEALTH PROBLEMS FROM ALCOHOL ADDICTION**¹¹

➤ **Short-term effects include:**

- vision problems
- memory problems (blackouts)
- depression.
- anxiety
- paranoia
- seizures
- impaired nutrition, resulting in weight loss, reduced energy and other health issues.

➤ **Long-term effects include:**

- permanent brain damage
- liver damage
- high risk of cancers, such as mouth and throat cancers
- high risk of cardiovascular disease, such as a stroke and heart failure
- more frequent illness, because of a weakened immune system¹².

❖ **STAGES OF ALCOHOL ABUSE**¹³:mainly 5 stages are present:

1. BINGE DRINKING-person has control over his drinking.
2. ALCOHOL ABUSE-Patient drink alcohol to boost his confidence or to alleviate feelings of stress or anxiety by frequent use of alcohol on regular basis.
3. PROBLEM DRINKING-in this stage, person enjoying alcohol which is a habit rather than choice for better mood and sleeping pattern.
4. PHYSICAL DEPENDENCY-here, tolerance to alcohol has increased so require more of it to feel the same level of enjoyment as before. And developed physical withdrawal symptoms if not taken alcohol.
5. ADDICTION-in this stage, there is compulsion to drink and will be powerless to resist. As a result, bad effect on personal and social life have been seen.

❖ DIFFERENT ALCOHOL QUANTITY¹⁴:

- BINGE DRINKING is having 4 or more drinks during a single occasion for women and 5 or more drinks for men.
- HEAVY DRINKING is having 8 or more drinks per week for women and 15 or more drinks per week for men.
- MODERATE ALCOHOL use is considered no more than one drink a day for women and up to two drinks a day for men. Drinking less is better for health than drinking more. Pregnant women or those younger than age 21 should not drink at all.

❖ CAUSES¹⁵:

➤ Psychological causes:

- curiosity; need for novelty seeking.
- Early imitation of alcohol and tobacco.
- History of emotional or other trauma.
- Low self-esteem.
- Concerns regarding personal autonomy.
- To get relief from fatigue and or boredom.
- Poor stress management
- Psychological distress.
- Mental illnesses and mood disorders, including anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia.

❖ Social causes:

- Ease of availability.
- Strictness of law enforcement.
- Religious reasons.
- Poor social and family support
- Rapid urbanization
- Permissive social attitude.
- Social and cultural pressure, including having a partner who drinks regularly (or a parent who does, for adolescents).

❖ Other causes:

- Environmental and genetic factors¹⁶.

❖ **FACT**¹⁷: Women are generally more sensitive than men

due to their smaller body weight, lower capacity to metabolize alcohol, and higher proportion of body fat.

❖ **COMPLICATION**: It results in various type of diseased condition. Few of them are:

- Mental illness¹⁸
- delirium tremens
- Wernicke–korsakoff syndrome
- Irregular heartbeat
- An impaired immune response
- increased cancer risk
- Drinking during pregnancy can result in fetal alcohol spectrum disorders¹⁸
- diabetes complications¹⁹
- sexual problems
- birth defects
- bone damage
- vision problems¹⁹
- arrhythmias
- stroke
- high blood pressure
- cardiomyopathy
- steatosis
- hepatitis
- cirrhosis

- Pancreatitis cancer, including of the mouth, esophagus, throat, liver, breast, and colon
- Pneumonia and tuberculosis
- Birth defects in your baby, if you drink while pregnant, due to fetal alcohol syndrome (this applies to anyone who drinks alcohol while pregnant, and not just those with AUD)
- Reproductive problems- erectile dysfunction in men and irregular or missed periods in women.

❖ PREVENTION²⁰

- Reducing stress and anxiety.
- Providing awareness and education.
- Regulating and diminishes the use of alcohol for drinking purpose.
- Increasing the cost of alcohol e.g by taxing.

TREATMENT²¹

- Support Groups
- Rehabilitation Programs
- Drug therapy
- counselling
- Medications
- Nutritional changes
- Breaking your drinking cycle
- With the right support and motivation.

Homoeopathic medicine for Alcoholism:

- **NUX VOMICA**-The patient suffers from tremors and headache. This medicine also corresponds to Delirium tremens. Every little noise frightens the patient. Patient is highly irritable with gastric complaints.

- **SULPHURIC ACID-** This is a great homoeopathic remedy for chronic alcoholism. Patients who are chilly and pale. They are hasty in their work and speed. They have alcoholic dyspepsia.
- **SYPHILINUM:** Hereditary tendency to take alcohol. Antisocial, feels depressed as if going to insane or being paralyzed. Delirium at night. Craves alcohol. Tendency to heavy drinking; Alcoholism.
- **QUERCUS:** It takes away the craving for alcoholic and antidotes the effects of alcohol. Fistula in Alcoholics.
- **RANUNCULUS BULBUS:** Bad effects of alcohol, results in delirium tremens, spasmodic hiccough, convulsions. Quarrelsome. Depression with desire to die.
- **STROPHANTHUS HISPIDUS:** Alcohol craving. Diminishes the craving for spiritus liquor slowly but surely.
- **AVENA SATIVA:** It has selective action on nervous system, tremors, chorea, paralytic weakness, confusion of mind. Insomnia-sleeplessness, especially of alcoholics.
- **SELENIUM METALLICUM:** They desire for brandy and other strong drink. Alcoholics with chronic liver affections. Sleeplessness with lascivious thoughts.
- **STRAMONIUM-** They are habitual drunkards. Persistent suicidal thoughts irritate the patient. Fright and terror is marked in these patients.
- **ARSENICUM ALBUM-** The patients have great weakness. Diseases from overuse of alcohol.
- **ZINC METALLICUM:** Alcoholism, cannot tolerate small quantity of wine, hunger at 11am. Trembling and twitching of various muscles. Constant motion of leg and feet, can't keep still.
- **STERCULIA ACUMINATA:** Alcoholic craving. Promotes appetite and digestion and lessens the craving for liquor.
- **AGARICUS-** Headache with sensation as if head is swollen. Loquacity with great mental exertion alternating with melancholy. There is involuntary twitching of muscles that ceases in sleep.

- **CANNABIS INDICA**-It is specifically indicated in acute alcoholism. There is marked violence with talkativeness and active mind.
- **OPIUM**-Delirium tremens occurs repeatedly. There are marked delusions and hallucinations. There are visions of animals and ghosts.
- **CAPSICUM**: Abstainers from accustomed alcoholics. Prostration and poor digestion of alcoholics. Sleeplessness, delirium tremens, depression with suicidal thoughts. Craving for stimulants, thirsty, if drinks causes shuddering.

CONCLUSION: Alcohol abuse have a depressant effect on central nervous system leading to harmful effect on every aspect of life of drinker whether it is health related or financial related. There is a stage where the person is not able to resist himself. From this time, homoeopathic medicines plays a vital role in lowers down the craving for alcohol even withdrawal symptoms can be managed easily. Because of the easy accessibility and cheaper cost of medicines, homoeopathic is the best alternative mode of treatment and have better adaptability.

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