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Utility of the Rheumatic Remedies Repertory by Herbert A. Roberts in the Homoeopathic Management of Rheumatic Diseases: A Clinical Observational Study

[1]Dr Urvashi Makwana, [2]Dr Hemangi Mahida, [3]Dr Pashmi Mehta, [4]Dr Yamini Soni
[1]Assistant Professor, [2]Associate Professor, [3]Designation of 3rd Author, [4] Associate Professor
[1]Name of Department of 1st Author,
[1]Name of organization of 1st Author, City, Country

Abstract : Rheumatic diseases, including osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and gout, are among the leading causes of chronic pain, disability, and reduced quality of life worldwide. Successful homoeopathic treatment depends upon accurate individualization and the selection of the most appropriate similimum. Clinical repertories serve as valuable tools in cases where characteristic symptoms are few or where common clinical symptoms predominate. Herbert A. Roberts' *The Rheumatic Remedies* is a specialized clinical repertory developed specifically for rheumatic disorders, yet its practical clinical utility has received limited scientific evaluation.

I. INTRODUCTION

Rheumatic diseases represent a diverse group of musculoskeletal disorders affecting joints, connective tissues, muscles, tendons, and ligaments. These conditions are among the leading contributors to chronic pain, disability, work absenteeism, and healthcare expenditure worldwide. According to the World Health Organization, musculoskeletal disorders affect more than 1.7 billion individuals globally, with osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and gout being among the most prevalent conditions.

Osteoarthritis is characterized by progressive degeneration of articular cartilage and subchondral bone remodeling, leading to pain, stiffness, and restricted mobility. Rheumatoid arthritis is a chronic autoimmune inflammatory disorder that primarily affects synovial joints and may produce irreversible deformities if untreated. Gout is a crystal-induced inflammatory arthritis caused by deposition of monosodium urate crystals due to hyperuricemia.

Conventional treatment primarily focuses on symptom control using analgesics, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), corticosteroids, disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs), and biological agents. Although these therapies are effective in controlling inflammation, prolonged use may be associated with adverse effects such as gastrointestinal complications, renal impairment, cardiovascular risks, immunosuppression, and increased treatment costs. Consequently, many patients seek complementary and alternative systems of medicine, including homoeopathy.

Homoeopathy approaches rheumatic diseases through individualized prescribing based on the totality of symptoms rather than the pathological diagnosis alone. The process of repertorization enables systematic analysis of symptoms to identify the most similar remedy. While comprehensive repertories such as Kent's Repertory and the Boenninghausen Therapeutic Pocket Book are widely employed, clinical repertories provide valuable assistance in cases presenting with predominantly common symptoms or well-defined clinical diagnoses.

One such specialized work is **The Rheumatic Remedies** authored by **Herbert A. Roberts**. First published in 1939, the book combines a concise Materia Medica with a dedicated repertory specifically designed for rheumatic disorders. It emphasizes modalities, concomitant symptoms, affected joints, constitutional tendencies, remedy relationships, and clinical correlations. This focused arrangement facilitates rapid repertorization in patients presenting with musculoskeletal complaints.

Despite its long-standing availability in homoeopathic literature, there remains limited published clinical evidence evaluating its practical usefulness in day-to-day practice. Scientific documentation of its clinical applicability is necessary to strengthen evidence-informed homoeopathic prescribing.

The present observational clinical study was therefore undertaken to evaluate the utility of **The Rheumatic Remedies Repertory by Herbert A. Roberts** in selecting individualized homoeopathic medicines for patients suffering from rheumatic diseases and to assess the clinical outcomes achieved using this repertory.

I. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Design
The present study was an **observational, prospective clinical study** undertaken to evaluate the clinical utility of *The Rheumatic Remedies* repertory authored by Herbert A. Roberts in selecting individualized homoeopathic medicines for patients suffering from rheumatic diseases.

Study Setting
The study was conducted at the Outpatient Department (OPD) of **Baroda Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital, Vadodara**, along with its affiliated peripheral health centre at Padra, Gujarat.

Study Duration
The study was conducted over a period sufficient to recruit, prescribe, and follow up all enrolled patients according to the study protocol.

Sample Size
A total of **30 clinically diagnosed patients** suffering from rheumatic diseases were included using random sampling.

Sampling Technique
Random sampling was adopted for patient selection from the outpatient department.

Inclusion Criteria
Patients fulfilling the following criteria were included:

- Patients of either gender and any age group.
- Clinically diagnosed cases of osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, or gout.
- Patients willing to participate and comply with regular follow-up.
- Cases presenting with common clinical symptoms, limited mental generals, or few characteristic symptoms where clinical repertorization was appropriate.

Exclusion Criteria
The following cases were excluded:

- Medical emergencies.
- Surgical cases requiring operative intervention.
- Patients with irregular follow-up.
- Critically ill patients requiring hospitalization.
- Cases with inadequate clinical information.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results of Descriptive Statics of Study Variables

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statics

Age Group (Years)	Number of Patients	Percentage (%)
31–40	6	20.0
41–50	7	23.3
51–60	10	33.3
61–70	6	20.0
>80	1	3.3
Total	30	100

Table 2. Gender Distribution

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	13	43.3
Female	17	56.7
Total	30	100

Table 3. Disease-wise Distribution

Disease	Number	Percentage
Osteoarthritis	13	43.3
Gout	10	33.3
Rheumatoid Arthritis	7	23.3

Table 4. Clinical Outcome

Outcome	Number	Percentage
Improved	17	56.7
Partially Improved	10	33.3
Status Quo	3	10

Table 5. Frequently Prescribed Remedies

Medicine	Number	Percentage
Rhus toxicodendron	6	20.0
Calcarea carbonica	5	16.7
Bryonia alba	3	10.0
Sepia	2	6.7
Ledum palustre	2	6.7
Causticum	2	6.7
Lycopodium	2	6.7
Colocynthis	2	6.7
Natrum sulphuricum	2	6.7
Others	4	13.3

Rhus toxicodendron emerged as the most frequently prescribed remedy, followed by *Calcarea carbonica*.

The present observational study evaluated the usefulness of Herbert A. Roberts' *The Rheumatic Remedies* repertory in the clinical management of osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and gout. The findings suggest that this specialized repertory is particularly valuable in patients presenting with characteristic regional symptoms, modalities, and concomitant features, even when mental generals are limited.

The predominance of patients in the 51–60-year age group is consistent with the known epidemiology of degenerative and inflammatory joint diseases, in which increasing age is a major risk factor. The higher proportion of female patients also aligns with previous reports demonstrating greater susceptibility to osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis among women, particularly after menopause.

Osteoarthritis represented the largest diagnostic category in the study population (43.3%), reflecting its high prevalence in outpatient musculoskeletal practice. Gout and rheumatoid arthritis constituted one-third and one-fourth of the study population, respectively.

A clinically meaningful improvement was observed in 56.7% of patients, while an additional 33.3% experienced partial improvement. Although this study lacked a control group, these findings indicate that individualized homoeopathic prescribing guided by *The Rheumatic Remedies* may contribute to symptom reduction and functional improvement in selected patients. The repertory appeared especially useful in cases where modalities and concomitant symptoms provided the principal basis for remedy differentiation.

Among the prescribed medicines, *Rhus toxicodendron*, *Calcarea carbonica*, and *Bryonia alba* were the most frequently indicated, corresponding well with their established therapeutic roles in homoeopathic Materia Medica for rheumatic conditions.

The combined Materia Medica and repertory structure of Herbert A. Roberts' work allowed efficient verification of shortlisted remedies, reducing the time required for cross-referencing and facilitating clinical decision-making.

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