

Title	Homeopathy For Rheumatoid Arthritis, Bronchial Asthma And Allergic Rhinitis
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Reference	Technology Review Report - 008/2016, online: http://www.moh.gov.my/index.php/database_stores/store_view_page/30/287

Aim

To assess the efficacy/effectiveness, safety, cost-effectiveness and organizational issue of Homeopathy for treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, bronchial asthma and allergic rhinitis

Conclusions and results

A total of 420 titles were identified through the Ovid interface and PubMed. There were six articles included in the study; a systematic review, four RCT and a pre-and post-intervention study. However, there was no retrievable evidence from the scientific databases on cost-effectiveness and organizational issue of this technology.

1) Efficacy/Effectiveness

- Rheumatoid Arthritis

There was very limited fair level of retrievable evidence to suggest that homeopathy was effective as an adjunctive treatment to improve the sign and symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis by reducing the mean pain score by 18% (mean 51.7 to 42.6), mean articular indices by 24% (mean 14.3 to 10.8) and mean ESR by 11% (mean 49.3 to 43.8). However, there was no significant difference in mean duration of morning stiffness following homeopathy compared to placebo.

- Bronchial Asthma

There was limited fair to good level of retrievable evidence to suggest the use of homeopathic modalities as an adjunctive treatment for bronchial asthma was effective in reducing the asthma symptoms (MD= -14.8; 95%CI=-23.3,-6.2) and corticosteroid usage (MD= -2.2; 95%CI=-3.2,-1.1) in adults and children. However, there were no significant difference in term of asthma control and quality of life, while for pulmonary function the evidence was conflicting.

- Allergic Rhinitis

There were very limited fair level of retrievable evidence to suggest that homeopathy was effective to improve nasal air flow (MD=19.8; 95% CI=10.4, 29.1) and quality of life in patients with allergic rhinitis compared to placebo. However, proper comparative trial between homeopathy and current contemporary drug is needed.

2) Safety

- Rheumatoid Arthritis

There was no retrieval evidence on safety of homeopathy for treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.

- Bronchial Asthma

For treatment of bronchial asthma, no mortality and major morbidity were reported. Minor complication such as exacerbation of asthma symptoms, headache, fever and sickness were reported.

- Allergic Rhinitis

There were significant initial aggravation of rhinitis symptoms (29%) and two with wheeze reported in homeopathic group compared to placebo.

Homeopathy remedies has been regulated as drugs by the United States Food and Drugs Administration (US FDA) sections 201 (g)(1) and 501 (b).

3) Cost-effectiveness

There was no cost-effectiveness study retrieved. However, cost analysis study suggested that bronchial asthma cost £615 more than usual care. For homeopathy, the users were willing to pay more (median RM65) as to what they have paid (median RM50).

Recommendations (if any)

Based on the above review, homeopathy for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, bronchial asthma and allergic rhinitis is not recommended until more high quality evidence is available.

Methods

Literature search was done to search for published articles to assess the safety, efficacy or effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of Homeopathy for treatment of Rheumatoid Arthritis, Bronchial Asthma and Allergic Rhinitis. The following electronic databases were searched via OVID Interface: MEDLINE (1946 to present), EBM Reviews-Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (2005 to April 2016), EBM Reviews-Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (April 2016 2015), EBM Reviews-Database of Abstracts of Review of Effects (3rd Quarter), EBM Reviews-Health Technology Assessment (1st Quarter 2016) NHS economic evaluation database (1st Quarter 2016), PubMed and USFDA database. The last search was run on 11 April 2016.

Further research/reviews required

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