

Second wave of COVID-19: Steps and future vision

India has recently seen a devastating second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a record high of over 414,000^[1] new cases on 6th May 2021. The unprecedented wave hit the country in several ways, with many states imposing complete or partial lockdowns to check further spread, their people struggling to come to terms with magnitude of the wave, and most unfortunately, many families losing their dear ones to COVID-19. The entire world was hoping and praying for India's recovery from this biggest jolt ever of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus-2 virus epidemic.

In such testing times, many homoeopathic doctors volunteered to help the COVID positive cases and suspected cases by reaching out to provide them free consultations, and homoeopathic medicines. Understanding the need of the hour, Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) released Guidelines for Homoeopathy Practitioners for Prophylaxis and Symptomatic Management of Home-isolated COVID-19 patients, as a reference source for such practitioners who wanted to be of service to the nation and its people.^[2] Ministry also released a countrywide 'AYUSH COVID-19 Counselling Helpline' for people who aimed to use any of the AYUSH systems for prevention/treatment/post-infection recovery from COVID-19.^[3] The medical (AYUSH) experts on the other end of line provide desired counselling to the callers, advise feasible remedies, as well as guide them about the availability of nearby AYUSH facilities.

Mucormycosis came up as an eminent post-COVID complaint, and soon caught the attention of the medical fraternity, with many reporting on ways to treat, and prevent the condition.^[4] Ministry of AYUSH also released an information document for Homoeopathy practitioners for symptomatic management of suspected and diagnosed cases of mucormycosis.^[5]

Around the world, views are being shared by Homoeopathy practitioners to consider clinical repurposing of the homoeopathic medicines in the treatment of COVID-19 as an adjuvant or stand-alone to help reduce costs and improve patient recovery.^[6] The world is indeed eager to see the published outcomes of some of the clinical trials that took place in India, and other parts of the world during the first wave of the pandemic, to push for this approach more assertively.

In this issue, we feature an indigenous fragmentarily proved drug, *Cuprum aceticum*. Since its inception, the Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH) has adopted the Drug Proving Research Program as one of its primary research areas. The pathogenetic response elicited by *Cuprum aceticum* in a multicentric, double-blind, randomised, placebo-controlled proving trial is analysed and presented in this issue, with

the intent to expand the scope of its use and further clinical verification.^[7] Another drug for which CCRH had conducted a proving in the yesteryears was *Gymnema sylvestre*, which is known to have an important place among antidiabetic medicinal plants.^[8] A preclinical study eliciting the response of streptozotocin-induced diabetic rats to homoeopathic preparations of *Gymnema sylvestre* in mother tincture form, 30C and 200C potencies, is also presented.^[9]

The research activities of CCRH also cover another key area which is drug standardisation. The Council has been undertaking studies on pharmacognostical, physico-chemical and pharmacological aspects of numerous drugs. One such drug is *Rumex acetosella*, whose physicochemical standardization and its comparison with *Rumex crispus* are presented in this issue.^[10]

One of the uniqueness of Homoeopathy is the varied clinical approaches used in practice while adhering to the basic principles of Homoeopathy. A study compares the effect of individualised homoeopathic medicine administered based on totality of symptoms vis-à-vis personality in patients suffering from knee osteoarthritis.^[11]

Another interesting study in this issue presents a plausible list of homoeopathic medicines that might help in the treatment or serve as genus epidemicus of COVID-19 disease.^[12]

Three evidence-based case reports on the successful homoeopathic treatment of wrist ganglion and two on nephrolithiasis are also presented in this issue.^[13-15]

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