

# Role of Drug Remedies in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): A Case Series

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## Abstract

**Introduction:** ADHD is the most common neurobehavioral disorder in children which comprises of 3 types: inattentive/hyperactive-impulsive/combined type. There are varied drugs in homoeopathy belonging to narcotic groups which seems to be effective in these type of cases. These groups have various alkaloids whose main sphere of action is on CNS or PNS as stimulant, depressor or hypnotic.

**Case summary:** Here, 3 cases are presented with different types of ADHD as diagnosed by Vanderbilt Diagnostic Scale. In all these cases homoeopathic drug remedies were prescribed on the basis of totality of symptoms. Marked improvement in all the cases substantiate the effectiveness of homoeopathy especially drug remedies in these type of behavioural problems when given constitutionally.

**Keywords:** ADHD, homoeopathy, narcotics, drug remedies, Vanderbilt diagnostic scale

## Introduction

### *Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is defined as a cognitive/behavioural developmental disorder mostly diagnosed in children under 12 years of age but can be found in adulthood also (residual ADHD). In India, as per the study conducted in Coimbatore, its prevalence is around 11.32% which is higher than the global estimate<sup>1</sup>. Its symptoms can be categorised into 3 types of behavioural patterns:

- Predominantly Inattentive type ( difficulty in concentration /focus)
- Predominantly Hyperactivity and impulsive type
- Combined type

It not only affects the individual but put stain on people around him. It has many negative social outcomes as well such as lower educational and employment attainment, rise in substance abuse or behavioural problems.

The conventional mode of treatment includes various stimulants like Ritalin (methylphenidate) which are habit forming and can cause wide range of adverse effects.

The Vanderbilt ADHD Diagnostic Rating scale (VADRS) is used in following cases to diagnose or assess the type and severity of ADHD symptoms. It is a psychological assessment tool developed by Mark Wolraich at the Oklahoma Health Sciences Center<sup>2</sup>, for parents of children aged 6-12 years to rate their child's behaviour in different areas over the past 6 months. It has 2 components: symptom assessment and impairment in performance and total of 55 questions. To meet DSM-5 criteria for ADHD, one must have at least 6 positive responses to either the inattentive 9 or hyperactive 9 core symptoms or both. The second section has a set of performance measures scored 1-5, there must be at least one item of the performance set in which the child scores a 4-5. Additionally, it has screening questions for

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3 common co-morbidities: Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Conduct Disorder, Anxiety/Depression.

#### *Drug remedies/Narcotics in homoeopathy*

Our Homoeopathy comprises many drug remedies from different plant families.

“Solanaceae family- belladonna, hyoscyamus, stramonium, Duboisia, Solanum, Tabacum, Dulcamara, Capsicum, pichi

Features of Solanaceae Family<sup>3,4</sup>:

- Solanaceae is a large family including 90 genera and more than 2000 species.
- Pharmacologically and therapeutically, remedies from Solanaceae family are strong anticholinergics acting on parasympathetic nervous system. They are known to possess varied range of alkaloids that includes atropine, scopolamine and hyoscyanine.
- First four attack predominantly narcotics affecting the brain.
- Dulcamara is mild narcotic drug
- Tabacum also has narcotic properties but it attacks other parts of the body apart from brain.
- The hallmark run throughout the remedy is sudden violence and explosive, spasmodic pains. It generates fright and flight mechanism in the body resulting in adrenaline rush affecting the mind and body.
- So, based on their pharmacological actions on body, these remedies work wonderfully for neurological and behavioural disorders such as convulsions, paralysis, depression, bipolar disorders, manias, delirium, and ADHD.

Papaveraceae family- opium, morphinum, morphinum aceticum, chelidonium, sanguinaria

Features of Papaveraceae Family<sup>5</sup>:

- This family includes 44 genera and 825 species.
- It contains more than 30 alkaloids and 6 main ones are morphine, codeine, thebaine, noscapine, narceine and papaverine.
- The main narcotic drug among them is opium whose narcotic and anodyne effect is due to engorgement of blood in the brain. It mainly affects CNS including respiratory system and CVS.
- The drugs under this family acts as mainly painkillers, hypnotics and diaphoretics. The

effect of opium are insensibility of nervous system, depression, stupor, depression of higher intellectual faculties, lessening of self-control, power of concentration and judgement and impaired reflexes.

Cannabaceae Family: cannabis indica, cannabis sativa

Features of Cannabaceae Family:

- The hemp family comprises of 11 genera and 170 species.
- They are actually psychoactive drugs causing intense exaltation while inhibiting the higher faculties.

## CASE REPORTS

### CASE 1

Patient named H.S, 6.5 years/M presented with complained of hyperactivity and increased anger since 2 yrs. The patient is very restless, hyperactive since 2 yrs. He does not sit or stand still and wants to go out all the time. When he is forced to come inside or told to sit, he gets angry and starts screaming loudly, throw things, hit, bite and pinch others, he even hits his own head against the wall. Anger is destructive, both extrapunitive and intrapunitive. He takes things and do not return and does not follow his parents' instructions. He has delayed growth since childhood. All developmental milestones are delayed (Sitting at 2years, standing and walking at 4 years). Height is short (as per his age). He does not speak yet, only make some noises, that's why not admitted to school till now.

**Birth History**-No crying at birth, did not accept mother's feed but took bottle feed. After 25 days of delivery, the child became cyanosed and rigidity of hands occurred, became normal in 1 day with medicines.

**Physical Generals**-Thermal reaction is Chilly, Appetite- normal, 2-3 chapattis/day, cannot control hunger, becomes impatient. Thirst -average 3-4L/d. Desire for Salty things and milk and Aversion to Sweets. Stool- D3-4, unsatisfactory, hard stools. Sleep is decreased, lies on side, startling present.

**Mental Generals**-The child does not sit or stand still, continuously roams around, wants to go out always, and when forced to come inside becomes very angry. He is disobedient, does not obey his parents'

instructions. Anger is violent, he bites and pinches others, throw things (extrapunitive anger) and even hits his own head (intropunitive). Anger is destructive in nature. He becomes frightened very easily, even on small things. Startles at loud noise. He has Fear of animals especially dogs and darkness. Cannot sleep in total darkness. He wants to hug and kiss others, more attached to his father, sleep by cuddling him. On observation, he seems very cautious.

**Diagnosis for ADHD through Vanderbilt Scale-** Predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type of ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder and Global Developmental Delay (all milestones delayed esp. speaking)

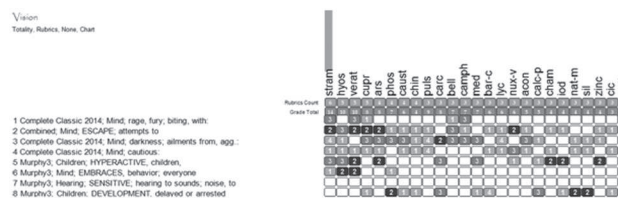
**Totality of the Case:**

- Patient is aggressive, violent anger with biting and pinching
- Wants to go out always
- Fear of dark very marked
- Cautious
- Likes to hug and cuddle
- Oversensitive to noise
- Delayed growth

**Treatment Plan and Follow-up table**

Date	Observation	Prescription
02.06.18	– Diarrhoea occurred after 15 days of medicine – G.C better. – 20 % improved, now he can sits and play	Placebo /tds/2 months
22.09.18	– Restlessness decreased – Appetite and thirst increased	<i>Stramonium</i> 10M (1 dose) Placebo /tds/2 months
24.11.18	– Understanding improved, follows commands and instructions from parents – Try to speak now, makes noises – Appetite increased	Placebo /tds/2 months
05.02.19	– G.C better – Trying to speak by combining same letters – Now sits still for longer time – Come inside when instructed to without being angry – can go downstairs and upstairs easily	<i>Stramonium</i> 10M (1 dose ) Placebo /tds/2 months
06.05.19	– Restlessness much better now. Continuous roaming about has reduced – Has started speaking few words – Irritability reduced – Anger is there but destructiveness is reduced, does not throw things now.	Placebo /tds/2 months

**Repertorial Result (Vision Software)**



After going through materia medica, the remedy covering the totality of the case and seems the constitutional remedy of patient is **Stramonium**, which also scored highest marks in repertorial result.

**First Prescription: 07.04.18-Stramonium 10M (1 dose),** Placebo/tds/2 months

**Justification of Remedy**

Panic ran throughout the remedy, frightened easily, desired light, patient was aggressive with swearing and violence. Thermal reaction was chilly. High potency was chosen as medicine was based more on mental generals.

**Management – For disability to speak**

1. Communicate more with your child: talk, sing, and encourage repetition.
3. Reinforce speech and language throughout the day.

**CASE 2**

Patient named A.S, 11 years/ M presented with complaints of hyperactivity since 5-6 years. The child is very restless, does not sit or stay still, that's why facing lot of difficulty in school. The child plays antics or pranks to attract people towards him. During clinic setting also, he is doing mischiefs. He did not sit or stay still even for short time. He also has coryza with headache with sudden onset since 1 week. Sneezing is there with dry cough. Pain in whole head with Pressing Pain, <at night, exposure to cold air.

**Birth History** - Delivery-normal, Developmental Landmarks- All on time

**Physical Generals**-Thermal reaction is Chilly with scanty perspiration. Appetite- Average, 2Chappatis/meal. Thirst is unquenchable, cannot drink enough, always complains that his thirst is not satisfied, 6-7l/day. Desire for sweets. Sleep is disturbing, for 6-7 hrs with jerking of body which is very marked. Dreams are Frightful sometimes.

**Mental Generals** -The child is very restless, does not sit or stay still. That's why facing poor performance in school. He plays antics, mimics others to tease them and does pranks on others. Very stubborn, does not listen if he wants something

Becomes angry if someone scolds him or forces him to do something, becomes very abusive, swearing and hits others. Suspicious in nature, thinks that people are criticizing him behind his back although they are talking about something else. He asks his mother frequently whether she is complaining about him to others. Not interested to take any medicine and even

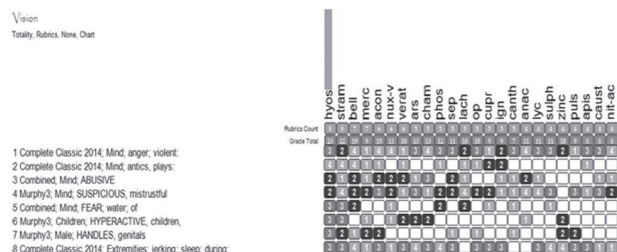
throws them. Has fear of water, does not go near any water body. Refuses to go for boating or swimming. The child has habit of touching his genitals.

**Diagnosis for ADHD by assessment through Vanderbilt Scale** -The child has predominantly hyperactive-impulsive type of ADHD

**Totality of the Case:**

- Violent anger with swearing
- Likes to do mischiefs, antics and imitation
- Suspicious of people around
- Fear of water very marked
- Habit of touching genitals
- Jerkings of body during sleep

**Repertorial Result (Vision Software)**



**First Prescription:** On 12.12.19- *Hyoscyamus niger* 200(1 dose) and Placebo/tds/1 month

**Justification of Remedy**

Covers important rubrics in first grade, precocious sexual behaviour, inciting, teasing disposition. Suspiciousness very marked with chilly thermals. High potency was chosen as medicine was more similitum in mental aspect.

**Treatment Plan and Follow-up table**

Date	Observation	Prescription
13.01.20	Fever occurred for few hrs which subsides by itself Cough absent Headache 90% better	Placebo /tds/1 month
15.02.20	No acute complaints sleep better	<i>Hyoscyamu</i> 1 M (1 Dose ) Placebo /tds/2 months
20.04.20	G.C better Jerking during sleep much better now Habit of touching his genitals better Anger reduced Restlessness slightly better	<i>Hyoscyamu</i> 1 M (1 Dose ) Placebo /tds/2 months
26.06.20	Restlessness much better App and sleep improved	<i>Hyoscyamu</i> 1 M (1 Dose ) Placebo /tds/2 months

**CASE 3**

Patient named APS, 12 years/ M, presented with complaints of inattentiveness and less focus since 2-3 years. It is more since few months. He got distracted easily, attention span is less, he appeared not to be listening, remain disorganised and make careless mistakes in studies. He became very overwhelmed by varied information and choices. Forgetfulness is very marked. Patient also complained of Sleep apnoea since 3-4 months, very restless and unrefreshing sleep, mild snoring during sleep, remain drowsy at daytime. Family history positive with grandfather having H/O sleep apnoea.

**Birth History:** Delivery- caesarean, Developmental Landmarks all on time

**Physical Generals-**Thermal is towards hot with profuse perspiration, appetite and thirst average, stools- usually constipated, stools skip for 1-2 days, hard, require straining, sleep restless, unrefreshing and disturbed due to sleep apnoea, dreams not specific.

**Mental Generals-** patient is very impatient, cannot wait for his turn, gets irritated easily if he has to wait for something. Easily distracted. Very talkative, mingles easily. Patient is non-diligent and irresponsible in nature. Does not do his work on time, has to be pushed for everything. Oversensitive to loud noises.

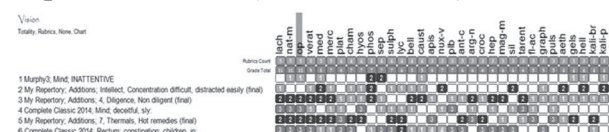
Patient is manipulative, can lie, non-conscientious in nature or lack of moral sense. Forgetfulness is very marked, forget even recent events. Patient is obese with weight- 52kg which seems the most probable cause for sleep apnoea

**Diagnosis for ADHD by assessment through Vanderbilt Scale-Combined ADHD**

**Totality of the case :**

- Poor concentration and easily distracted
- Liar, lack of moral sense
- insincere

**Repertorial Result (Vision Software)**



**First Prescription: 02.07.20-Opium 1M (1 Dose), Placebo/tds/1 month**

**Justification of Remedy**

- Non-diligent and non-conscientious, oversensitive to loud noises marked, chronic constipation and profuse perspiration, memory weak, Covers sleep apnoea. High potency was chosen as it covers more mental generals.

**Management for sleep apnoea**

- Lose weight and exercise
- Sleep on your side and abdomen

**Treatment Plan and Follow-up table**

Date	Observation	Prescription
04.08.20	Consistency of stools improved sleep somewhat better - Thirst slightly better - no other changes seen as such	Placebo /tds/1 month
03.09.20	Sleep apnoea better, sleep has become sound Appetite and thirst increased Stools better, consistency and frequency improved	Placebo /tds/2 months
10.11.20	Fever and coryza since 2 days sleep apnoea better	1.Acute med on the basis of acute totality for 5 days 2. Placebo /tds/2 months
25.01.21	G.C better Focus and concentration has improved, performance improved in class ( as per both parents and teachers) Writing has also improved Stools better, does not require much straining now sleep sound	Placebo/tds/2 months
06.03.21	Focus and attention span has improved which in turn enhanced the school performance Irritability reduced Stools better and sound sleep now	Placebo/tds/2 months

## Discussion

We have presented 3 case reports of children up to 12 years of ADHD treated with homeopathic drug remedies with favourable outcomes. These cases were diagnosed with ADHD on the basis of their history and assessment through Vanderbilt Diagnostic Scale (Parent Informant). They are then followed or reviewed at regular intervals. The medicines were prescribed to all the patients after detailed, careful and thorough case taking, analysis, evaluation and repertorisation of cases. The homeopathic medicines were prescribed through individualisation keeping in view of sensitivities, susceptibilities, miasmatic cleavage and essence of personality. The medicines prescribed in these 3 cases belong to the Narcotics/Drug remedies of our Materia Medica showing effectiveness of drug remedies in these types of disorders.

Out of 3 cases, first 2 cases were prescribed Hyoscyamus and Stramonium which belongs to Solanaceae family and 3<sup>rd</sup> or last case was prescribed Opium which belongs to the Papaveraceae family. Thus, it verifies “Law of Similia” or Nature’s law where narcotics produce exaltation, excitement, hyperactivity and they cure similar states such as Hyperkinetic Disorder or ADHD (predominantly hyperactive impulsive type). In this third case, as Opium produces relaxation, depression of CNS, it is found more useful in combined type of ADHD where inattentiveness and lack of focus is also predominant. Therefore, we can say in behavioural disorders like ADHD, among Homeopathic medicines, drug remedies are found more useful. Other group of remedies which follow are remedies belong to animal kingdom esp. Insect group.

We also found out that in follow ups, the patients were improved as a whole, at the physical, mental and emotional level. It brings improvement in other associated disorders with ADHD as well as for eg. ODD- oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder. Thus, verifying homeopathic medicines work holistically as compared to other conventional mode of treatment like Ritalin and other drugs which suppresses the brain and produce various adverse effects.

The limitation of this case series is, it is reporting only 3 cases which are inadequate to infer definite effectiveness of homeopathic medicines in ADHD and proving that drug remedies come more predominant. We have used Diagnostic scale to

reach for accurate diagnosis but no assessment scale to accurately define the improvement. In future, controlled trials should be conducted on a larger sample size and with improved methodology to further validate our results and verify efficacy of homeopathic medicines (esp. Drug remedies) in cases of ADHD.

## Conclusion

Homeopathic Constitutional treatment or approach considering all history, susceptibilities, tendencies, sensitivities and miasmatic cleavage is found more effective in cases of ADHD as compared to conventional mode of treatment. It brings about holistic improvement in patient, improving associated disorders as well. The predominant group of remedies prescribed both in predominantly hyperactive impulsive or inattentive type belong to the Narcotic or drug group. Thus, drug remedies or narcotic group of our homeopathic materia medica should be considered or thought of while approaching these type of hyperkinetic behavioural disorders.

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