

The Role of Homoeopathic Medicines in the Management of Insomnia: A Retrospective Observational Study

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ABSTRACT

Background: Insomnia, a prevalent sleep disorder, significantly affects the quality of life and mental health of individuals by impairing cognitive function, mood, and overall well-being. Conventional treatments often result in dependency or adverse effects, limiting their long-term effectiveness. Homoeopathy offers an individualised, safe, and holistic approach to managing insomnia by addressing the root causes, improving sleep quality, and restoring the body's natural sleep rhythm without harmful side effects. **Objective:** To assess the efficacy of homoeopathic medicines in improving sleep quality among patients with primary insomnia. **Materials and Methods:** A retrospective observational study was conducted on patients diagnosed with primary insomnia. Inclusion criteria were adults aged 18–65 years with sleep disturbances persisting for at least three months. Patients with secondary insomnia or psychiatric illnesses were excluded. Sleep quality was assessed using the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) at baseline and after three months of treatment. Statistical analysis was performed using paired t-tests. **Results:** Out of 100 patients screened, 60 met the inclusion criteria ($n = 60$). The mean PSQI score improved significantly from 15.2 ± 2.5 at baseline to 8.3 ± 1.9 after three months of treatment ($P < 0.01$). Sleep duration increased from 4.2 ± 1.1 hours to 6.8 ± 0.9 hours ($P < 0.01$), and nighttime awakenings decreased in 75% of patients. Frequently prescribed remedies included *Coffea cruda* ($n = 22$), *Nux vomica* ($n = 15$), and *Arsenicum album* ($n = 12$), with each showing high rates of improvement in sleep quality. **Conclusion:** Homoeopathic treatment significantly improved sleep quality in patients with primary insomnia. The individualised approach suggests its potential as a safe and effective alternative. Further controlled studies are needed to validate these findings.

Keywords: *Homoeopathy, Insomnia, Sleep disorders, Holistic treatment, Coffea cruda, Retrospective observational study, kali phosphoricum*

Insomnia is a common sleep disorder characterised by difficulty falling asleep, staying asleep, or experiencing restorative sleep, leading to impaired daytime functioning and reduced quality of life [1]. It affects approximately 10–30% of the global population,

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with some studies reporting even higher prevalence rates in specific groups [2]. Individuals with insomnia often experience fatigue, irritability, mood disturbances, cognitive impairment, and an increased risk of accidents due to insufficient sleep [3].

Insomnia is classified as either acute (short-term) or chronic (long-term). Acute insomnia typically lasts a few days or weeks and is often linked to stress, lifestyle changes, or environmental factors, while chronic insomnia persists for a month or longer and is frequently associated with underlying medical or psychological conditions [4]. Various factors contribute to insomnia, including high stress levels, irregular sleep schedules, mental health conditions, chronic pain, and the excessive use of stimulants such as caffeine or nicotine [5].

Conventional treatments for insomnia include cognitive behavioural therapy for insomnia (CBT-I) and pharmacological interventions such as benzodiazepines and non-benzodiazepine hypnotics [6]. However, while medications may provide short-term relief, they are associated with side effects such as dependency, tolerance, and withdrawal symptoms, making them less suitable for long-term management [7]. Alternative and complementary approaches, including homoeopathy, are being explored for their potential to provide individualised, non-habit-forming treatment options that address the underlying causes of insomnia [8].

Homoeopathy is a holistic system of medicine that focuses on treating the root cause of diseases rather than just alleviating symptoms [9]. It is based on the principle that a weaker illness can be naturally overcome when a stronger, similar condition affects the body, a concept described as the “law of similars” [10]. This approach suggests that a properly selected homoeopathic remedy stimulates the body’s self-healing mechanism. Due to its individualised and non-invasive nature, homoeopathy has gained global acceptance and is now the second most widely used healthcare system worldwide (World Health Organisation [11]).

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of homoeopathic medicines in improving sleep quality and duration among individuals with primary insomnia. By analysing clinical data retrospectively, the study seeks to contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting integrative and personalised treatment approaches for sleep disorders.

Objective: To evaluate the clinical efficacy of homoeopathic medicines in managing primary insomnia by analysing changes in sleep quality and duration.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted at Dr. Puri’s Homoeopathy, Chandigarh, India, between January 2020 and December 2024. Cases were retrospectively analysed from medical records maintained during the specified period.

Inclusion Criteria

- Adults aged 18–65 years.
- Diagnosed with primary insomnia persisting for at least three months based on DSM-5 criteria.
- Complete pre- and post-treatment medical records were available for evaluation.

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Exclusion Criteria

- Cases of secondary insomnia caused by medical conditions, psychiatric illnesses, or substance-use disorders.
- Incomplete or missing pre- and/or post-treatment data.

Screening Process

A total of 100 patient records were reviewed, out of which 60 met the inclusion criteria. The remaining 40 were excluded due to secondary insomnia or incomplete medical records. Retrospective observational studies rely on well-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the validity of findings [12].

Intervention

Patients were treated with individualised homoeopathic remedies selected based on a detailed life-space investigation, repertorization of presenting symptoms, and constitutional analysis [13]. Remedies were prescribed in 30C, 200C, or 1M potency depending on the patient's symptom severity and chronicity [14]. The most frequently prescribed remedies included:

- **Coffea cruda:** Indicated for hyperactivity and racing thoughts, commonly seen in insomnia due to mental overactivity [15].
- **Nux vomica:** Prescribed for individuals experiencing insomnia due to stress, overwork, or stimulant overuse [14].
- **Arsenicum album:** Effective for insomnia related to anxiety, restlessness, and fear of impending danger [13].
- **Kali phosphoricum:** Recommended for cases of insomnia arising from nervous exhaustion and mental fatigue [15].

In addition to individualised remedies, placebo pills were administered to encourage adherence to treatment, a common practice in homoeopathic research for maintaining patient engagement [16]. Follow-ups were conducted biweekly or monthly, with adjustments in potency and remedy selection based on Kent's 12 Observations, a framework for monitoring remedy response [17].

Outcome Assessment

The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) was used to evaluate sleep quality at baseline and after three months of treatment. The PSQI assesses seven domains, including sleep latency, duration, efficiency, and disturbances, with higher scores indicating poorer sleep quality [18]. This tool is widely used in clinical and research settings for assessing insomnia severity and treatment outcomes.

Statistical Analysis

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS (v.25). Paired t-tests were performed to compare baseline and post-treatment PSQI scores. Statistical significance was set at $P < 0.05$.

Follow-Up Period

The average follow-up period was 90 days. Changes in PSQI scores were used to evaluate treatment efficacy. Reduction in scores was interpreted as improvement, whereas unchanged or increased scores were considered as status quo or worsening, respectively.

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RESULTS

Baseline Characteristics

The age of the 60 patients included in the study ranged from 18 to 65 years, with a mean (\pm SE) of 42.5 ± 12.3 years. The male-to-female ratio was 1:1.3. Most patients reported a sleep duration of less than five hours per night before treatment.

Treatment Outcomes

A significant improvement in sleep quality was observed after homoeopathic treatment.

- The mean Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) score significantly reduced from 15.2 ± 2.5 at baseline to 8.3 ± 1.9 after three months ($P < 0.01$).
- Sleep duration improved from 4.2 ± 1.1 hours to 6.8 ± 0.9 hours ($P < 0.01$).
- Nighttime awakenings decreased in 75% of patients.

A paired t-test comparison of pre- and post-treatment PSQI scores showed a statistically significant difference ($P < 0.01$), confirming the efficacy of individualised homoeopathic treatment.

As shown in Table 1, the pre- and post-treatment sleep quality assessment demonstrates a significant reduction in PSQI scores, indicating improved sleep quality. The table presents the mean values along with the standard error, highlighting the notable improvement in sleep parameters after homoeopathic treatment.

Table 1: Pre- and Post-Treatment Sleep Quality Assessment (mean \pm standard error, n = 60)

Outcome Measures	Baseline (Mean \pm SE)	Post-Treatment (Mean \pm SE)	Change (Post - Pre)	Paired t	P-value
PSQI Score	15.2 ± 2.5	8.3 ± 1.9	-6.9 ± 1.8	7.82	<0.01
Sleep Duration (hours)	4.2 ± 1.1	6.8 ± 0.9	$+2.6 \pm 0.7$	6.14	<0.01

Frequently Prescribed Homoeopathic Remedies

The selection of homoeopathic medicines was based on constitutional analysis and repertorization. The most commonly prescribed remedies were:

Table 2: Frequency and Effectiveness of Homeopathic Remedies for Insomnia (n = 60)

Medicine	Number of Patients (n = 60)	Improved (%)	Status Quo (%)	Worsened (%)
Coffea cruda	22	18 (81.8%)	2 (9.1%)	2 (9.1%)
Nux vomica	15	12 (80%)	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.7%)
Arsenicum album	12	9 (75%)	2 (16.7%)	1 (8.3%)
Kali phosphoricum	8	6 (75%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)

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As shown in Table 2, the frequency and effectiveness of prescribed remedies indicate that *Coffea cruda* was the most frequently used (36.7%) and the most effective, showing 81.8% improvement, particularly in cases of insomnia due to mental hyperactivity. *Nux vomica* (25%) and *Arsenicum album* (20%) also demonstrated high effectiveness, with 80% and 75% improvement rates, respectively. *Kali phosphoricum* was beneficial in cases of nervous exhaustion-related insomnia, with a 75% improvement rate.

DISCUSSION

This retrospective study highlights the effectiveness of individualised homoeopathic treatment in improving sleep quality and duration among patients with primary insomnia. The significant reduction in PSQI scores ($P < 0.01$) and increase in sleep duration indicate notable clinical benefits. Additionally, a decrease in nighttime awakenings (75% of patients) suggests improved sleep continuity.

The study findings align with previous research on homoeopathic management of insomnia but demonstrate greater statistical significance in treatment outcomes. Unlike earlier studies where pre- and post-treatment differences in sleep parameters were inconsistent, this study provides stronger evidence with quantifiable data. The inclusion of *Kali phosphoricum*, particularly for nervous exhaustion-related insomnia, further distinguishes these findings.

Clinical Implications and Comparative Insights

The effectiveness of *Coffea cruda*, *Nux vomica*, and *Arsenicum album* in treating insomnia related to mental hyperactivity and stress reinforces their therapeutic role. The individualised selection of remedies, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach, likely contributed to the positive outcomes.

Compared to conventional sedatives, homoeopathy offers a safer, non-addictive alternative with minimal side effects. However, the absence of a control group and objective sleep assessments (e.g., actigraphy or polysomnography) remains a limitation.

Future Directions

To strengthen the evidence base, future studies should include:

- Randomised controlled trials (RCTs) for stronger validation.
- Objective sleep assessments beyond self-reported data.
- Longer follow-up periods to assess sustained benefits.

These steps will help establish homoeopathy as a credible therapeutic approach for insomnia and expand its clinical application.

CONCLUSION

Homoeopathy provides a promising, non-invasive approach to managing insomnia by addressing its underlying causes. The significant improvements observed in sleep quality and duration highlight its potential as a complementary or alternative therapy. Further research with larger sample sizes and controlled settings is recommended.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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