

Case study

Utility of Doctrine of Signature in Determining Totality through Clinical Cases

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ABSTRACT

Most important to note is here we have seen more cases in children. Almost from age group 5-10 there are 11 children has seen with different chronic cases with doctrine of signature. There are different chronic cases that fall into these age group with different medicines. For the treatment of each of the disease we must diagnose the actual causes of the illness and then try to manage the case as per our protocols. In Homoeopathy the judicious prescribing can prevent the most critical condition too. Therefore, the study was under taken to study utility of doctrine of signature in determining totality through clinical cases a bonafied and genuine research work for MD (Homoeopathy) taken with following aims and objectives such as evaluation of doctrine of signature, enrichment of different clinical cases, and to understand psychosomatic concept of disease

Methods: Minimum 30 patients were selected on the basis of inclusion and exclusion criteria, history and physical findings. No particular sampling procedure was adopted.

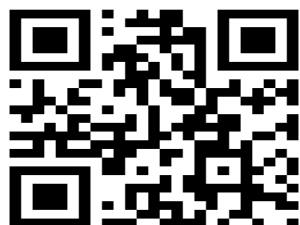
As per the proforma prepared for the topic detailed case history was taken. Analysis of the case done and repertorisation of the case was done either manually or with the help of computer and the similimum was confirmed with the Materia Medica. Data was analyzed and the outcome was assessed by the degree of improvement as per Questionnaire prepared.

Follow up: Cases are followed for every 15 days for the first 3 months and then monthly once till the end of study period. Physical, radiological, and laboratory examinations done periodically whenever needed. The following parameters were fixed according to the type of response obtained after treatment: **Improved:** No recurrence of sign and symptoms for 6months. **Partially improved:** 60 to 70% improvement of sign and symptoms and still in treatment. **Not improved:** No sign of improvement even after sufficient time is given. The questionnaire has been prepared keeping in mind the basic complaints presented by the patient coming to OPD.

Results

Out of 30 cases (90%) Improved totally, 02 cases partially improved (7%) and 1 case (3%) didn't show any improvement even after all the treatment.

Keywords: Doctrine signature, homoeopathy, clinical cases



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INTRODUCTION:

The Doctrine of Signature is actually an old concept found in many European civilization and later on accepted by various schools of medicines. People had altogether different attitudes towards this concept. Initially, it was well accepted by the proponents of

many schools, but later on discarded by calling it as a kind of coincidence or fake science. Presently, there are at least a few doctors who accept the ancient doctrine of signature. On the other hand, there is a vast majority including many homoeopaths that

consider the doctrine of signature as fallacious. Nevertheless, many including the critics of this concept at least mention the signature aspects of certain drug sources while dealing with *Materia Medica*. Since in the present era it is discussed only in Homoeopathy, Many says that now this doctrine is accepted only by homoeopaths, and often they exploit this misconception as a weapon to criticize homoeopathy.

Before, we go in to the pros and cones of this concept, let me shed light on the literal meaning of Doctrine of Signature'. The word signature is said to be a duplet, which has been derived from two word sign'and nature', meaning _signs of nature'.

We know that the doctrine is a belief that is accepted as authoritative by a particular group or school of thoughts. In simple terms, Doctrine of Signature'is a belief on various signs of nature. This doctrine proposed that parts of plants having a resemblance to any part of the human body is having a therapeutic relationship and the same plant or its parts can be used for disease of the particular organ. They also believed that such relationship also exists between and specific places where plants grew. As per these concepts. God has provided unique healing powers to the most of the living and nonliving things and left hint for us to distinguish the sphere of action of each substance.

In other words, the unique external feature of a plant or a substance is an indication of the purpose of creation of that particular substance. It often seems funny but this concepts has introduced many drugs in to the field of therapeutics of different schools.

History

Jakob Hohme:

The history of Doctrine of Signature goes back to jakob bohme,a master shoemaker in Germany(1575-1624)

Who had a profound mystical vision on the relationship between God and his creation. This prophetic vision induced him to write on the signature of things created by God. His philoshpical work signature Rerum (signature of all things) became very popular and later on it was adapted in to the field of medicine. This doctrine states —by

observation, one can determine from the color of the flowers or roots, the shapes of leaves, the places of growing, or other signatures what the plants, purpose was in God plan.

Paracelsus:

Paracelsus Von Hohenheim (1493- 1541) a Swiss physician was also a famous proponent of the doctrine of signature and he created an alternative model and generated a mind-body medicine. He introduced treatments of particular illnesses based on his observation and experience.

He also advocated the relation between the drug source and drug symptoms. According to him, disease or morbid states should be called by the names of their remedies.

The Doctrine of Signature was given renewed thrust in his writings and continued to be embraced until the 17th century.

His law of signature is an application of medicine on the basis of similarity of anatomical structures, colors and smell between the plants and the human body.

Paracelsus also proposed the concepts such as similar cures the similar, scorpion cures scorpion, mercury cures mercury, etc.

William Coles :(1626- 1662)

William Coles, a botanist and herbalist found that walnuts were good for treating head ailments because of its head like shape. Similarly, the little holes in the leaves of hypericum resembles the skin, which is a hint for its use in all sorts injuries affecting the skin. Some old examples of

Doctrine of signatures: Those plants, which agreed the doctrine of signature, still carry the word root —wort| an Anglo-Saxon word (means plant) along with their modern name. Some examples are:

Mandrake plant (similar to a child): Hence useful for sterility. Spleen wort (similar to spleen): Hence useful for disorders of spleen Louse wort (similar to lice): Hence useful in repelling lice.

Tooth wort (similar to teeth):

Hence useful for tooth complaints. Liver wort: (similar to liver): Hence useful for liver disorders. Up to the end of the sixteenth century, resemblance played a constructive role in the knowledge of Western culture.

It was resemblance that largely guided

exegesis and the interpretation of texts; it was resemblance that organized the play of symbols, made possible knowledge of things visible and invisible, and controlled the art of representing them."

The signatures are described as post hoc attributions and mnemonics, of value only in creating a system for remembering actions attributed to medical herbs.

There is no scientific evidence that plant shapes and colors help in the discovery of medical uses of plants. Another explanation is that the human mind, in trying to find patterns to explain phenomena, while lacking adequate scientific knowledge, resorts to anthropomorphism

Influence of Doctrine of Signature on Homoeopathy:

The influence of the doctrine of signature on Homoeopathy is a debatable topic since some skeptics consider it as a forerunner of the Similia principle. It has been claimed that the library where Hahnemann was employed at Hermannstadt contained historical works, including those of Paracelsus, and few people say that, it was those works of Paracelsus, which planted the seed of Homoeopathy in Hahnemann's mind but to support this speculation, so far, no one has given any kind of solid evidences.

However, this point was utilized maximum by Hahnemann's opponents in those days. They went even up to the extent by saying that Hahnemann took the whole Homoeopathy from Paracelsus. (Hahnemann's letter to Boenninhausen) Some people still consider Paracelsus and Halle (Swedish physician) as forerunners of Hahnemann as they also did experiments to discover the nature of certain remedies.

However, their attempts were not coordinated and could make little impression upon the medical world.

Later, it was Hahnemann who discovered the fundamental cause behind the diseases and the most suitable way to eradicate the disease using a dynamic form of medicine selected on the basis of similarity.

But the similarity proposed by Hahnemann was totally different from that of Paracelsus. Unlike Paracelsus and others, Hahnemann followed pure experimentation, exact

observation, correct interpretation and finally the scientific construction, which resulted in the discovery of Homoeopathy.

The cardinal principles of Homoeopathy can be proved even today by proper administration of medicines.

Instead of concluding whether there is any scientific backing behind the doctrine of signature or is it just a superstitious belief, better we assess how it was helpful and how it can be helpful in future.

Undoubtedly, we can say that this concept helped us to introduce many drug substances in to the field of therapeutics.

Apart from that, it helps to study *Materia medica* in a literal style and to compare and remember some symptoms thereby making the subject more interesting.

It is now clear that the doctrine of signature helps us for the study of *materia medica* and not for the practical application of *materia medica*.

As we know that there is no short cut in medicine, drugs selected based on similarity with the totality of the case is the only way to cure.

Some Examples of Doctrine of Signatures among Homoeopathic drugs: *Pulsatilla*— Movement of flowers— Changability of *pulsatilla* patient.

Lachesis— Snake is restless suspicious & protrude tongue— Patient is also same.

Chelidonium— Yellow juice— Useful for jaundice

Calcarea carb— Hard shell to protect the soft body— Patient is soft and needs protection.

Sanguinaria— Red color— Useful for bleeding.

Cockroach— Lives in cracks, crevices, damp places— Useful for asthma of people living in damp basements and cellars.

Digitalis— Blood colored dots on petals— Given for disorders of blood vessels.

Euphrasia— Black spot in corolla looks like a pupil— Useful for eye complaints.

Belladonna— Grows in soil rich in calcium carbonate— Hence *calc carb* is complimentary to *belladonna*.

Tarentula hispania— Spiders comes out when drums are beaten— Given for patients who are sensitive to music.

Hypericum— Has red juice— Used in

hemorrhages.

Bryonia– Root is fleshy, yellowish white, rough with a bitter taste– Patient is also fleshy with yellow white colored tongue, rough irritating temperament and has bitter taste.

Blatta Orientalis- Live in cracks and damp places and useful for COPD.

Pioneers on Doctrine of Signature:

Hahnemann- (1745- 1843)

Hahnemann was strongly against this concept because of his aversion to all sorts of speculations. In the 110th aphorism he denounced the doctrine of signature and mixture prescription.

He had an intension that in future people should not liberally speculate on this basis. In the 110th aphorism he says.

...and that the only possible way to ascertain their medicinal powers is to observe those changes of health medicines are capable of producing in the healthy organism; for the pure, peculiar powers of medicines available for the cure of disease are to be learned neither by any ingenious a priori speculations, nor by the smell, taste or appearance of the drugs, nor by their chemical analysis, nor yet by the employment of several of them at one time in a mixture (prescription) in diseases.

C M Boger:

(1861- 1935) He says in his work Philosophy of healing, —The doctrine of signatures has been derided and said to rest upon pure fancy; but I know of no accidents in nature and everything has an adequate cause, hence we should not be too ready to attribute such things to mere coincidence.

Such correspondences are too numerous as well as much too striking to be lightly passed over. It seems rather a case of not knowing just what they mean or what the real connection is.

H A Robert:

H A Robert says in his work on Homoeopathic philosophy-Variou doctrines of healing sprang up through the years; perhaps the most interesting of these was the doctrine of signatures, founded on the belief that each member of the vegetable kingdom carried within itself the likeness of some organ or part of the human economy, as a

sign that this particular plant was applicable to disturbances of that organ.

That was probably the most consistent method among all the very ancient systems of applying drugs.

J C Burnett: (1840-1901)

Dr. J C Burnett had a supporting attitude towards this doctrine. He writes in his work on diseases of liver

The interaction of the human organism with its environment has generally been recognized in every age according to the views current at the time“

The relations of the microcosm to the macrocosm used to be a big chapter in medical doctrine.

The old doctrine of signatures is laughed at by almost all physicians, inclusive of the homoeopaths, and yet it is not without considerable foundation in fact; and, indeed, facts in great numbers may be drawn from homoeopathic literature in support of its real practical value.

It has often helped me and I have long since ceased to ridicule it. Of course, it can easily be turned upside down and made to look silly, but still there it is and in the long run will most certainly be justified by science.

I am very certain Hahnemann believed in it for it is manifest that he drew very numerous indications from it for his remedies.()

That Constantine Hering also believed in it seems pretty certain, and Hering knew his Hohenheim, of whose works he made a splendid collection.

Von Grauvogl, too, shows that he was not uninfluenced by it.

Rademacher ever made merry over it, and yet many of his remedies came into use through it, Chelidonium to wit.

Von Grauvogl years ago recommended Pulmones vulpecularum in asthma and I have followed his recommendation with advantage, he was laughed at a good deal at the time, but now science comes along and puts a stop to the ridicule so long cast upon Paracelsic organ feeding.

Dr. William Boericke

The lungs of a fox must be specific against asthma – because this animal has a very vigorous respiration. Hypericum, having red juice, ought, therefore, to be use in

hæmorrhage. Euphorbia, having a milky juice, must be good for increasing the flow of milk. Sticta, having some likeness to the lungs, was called pulmonaria (Lung wort) – and esteemed as a remedy for pulmonary complaints.¶(5)AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aims

To study the utility of Doctrine of Signature in determining totality through clinical cases.

Objectives

Evaluation of Doctrine of Signature

Enrichment of different clinical cases.

To understand psychosomatic concept of disease

Research question

Whether utility of doctrine of signature is very determined in totality through clinical cases?

Hypothesis

Homoeopathic medicines plays significant role in the treatment by doctrine of signature in different clinical cases especially in children

Null hypothesis

Doctrines of Signature have no significant role in the management of different chronic cases.

Result and conclusion

From the study taken up to know the role of utility of doctrine of signature in determining the totality through clinical cases conclude with the following findings.

Out of the thirty randomly selected cases,

Out of the thirty cases, gender distribution observed in the study, the majority of the patients were males, i.e. 16 cases (56.67%).

The most common disease that was present amongst the Gastrointestinal ailments were – Chronic constipation which was present in 11 out of 30 cases (36.67%), the next is Acute diarrhoea which was present in 8 out of 30 cases that is (26.67%) and the prevalence of other diseases is: Recurrent abdominal pain which was present in 5 out of 30 patients that is (16.67%) and Alimentary Intolerance and Infantile colic which was 3 out of 30 each, constituting 10% each.

The most common dominant miasm observed in these cases were Psora which was present in 18 out of 30 patients that is 60 %, then Syphilis which was dominant is 8

out of 30 cases that is 26.67%, then Sycosis which was dominant is 4 out of 30 cases, that covers 13.33%. The miasms of the patient were decided totally on the basis of their desires and aversions, their peculiar nature and character of their discharges

The commonest mental symptom seen in the patients were Fear of dark (26.67%) Desire being alone (23.33%), Irritability (13.33%) and Mild, weak memory, Shy and Sincere were there in (10%) each, the other mental symptoms were very minimal.

The most common medicine that helped in the doctrine of of the children were Natrum mur, which was proved helpful in 10 patients out of 30, that is 33.33%, next comes arsenic album and bryonia that was prescribed to 6 patients each that gives a percentage of 20% to each of them, then comes chelidonium which was given to 5 out of 30 patients and covers 16.67% and lastly sepia which was given to 3 patients out of 30 and covered 10%.

The medicine was prescribed to 30 random cases as already mentioned earlier. Amongst these 30 patients; 20 patients got Improved that is were free from all symptoms and with no relapse of symptoms in follow-ups; which constitutes 80%. 5 out of 30 patients that is 16.67% had been noted as partially improved as they had partial improvements seen, or had relapse of their complaints, or might have not reported with complete relied as expected. There was 5 cases that had not improvement at all, which makes up 3.33%.

The generalized conclusion drawn is-

Majority of patients that were included in this study group showed a significant improvement after homoeopathic treatment.

Individualized treatment seems to be more efficacious in the management of gastrointestinal ailments in children.

Homeopathy and is individualistic approach has great results in the treatment of diseases like Lactose intolerance that has no help with any other pathy.

The result of the above study clearly indicates that the different homoeopathic medicines have proved to be of great help in effective treatment of doctrine of signature ailments especially children in different clinical cases if the constitutional approach

has been taken up.

Therefore, we can conclude that homeopathic remedies are very effective in the treatment of children as they not just improve but also avoid recurrence of the symptoms in the patients.

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