

# DETERMINANTS OF PREFERENCE OF HOMEOPATHIC TREATMENT TO ALLOPATHIC TREATMENT

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**ABSTRACT... Introduction:** This study was conducted to find out determinants of preference of homeopathic treatment to allopathic one. **Objectives:** To determine factors influencing people's attitude towards homeopathic treatment. **Study Design:** This was an descriptive cross sectional epidemiological study. **Setting:** At homeopathic clinics situated at Zenana Hospital road Bahawalpur **Period:** 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010 to 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 2010. **Subjects & Methods:** Tool of data collection was preformed questionnaire which was used to collect relevant information. The informed consent was taken. Eighty subjects were included in the study. **Results:** Out of total respondents, 87% preferred homeopathic treatment and only 12.5% preferred allopathic treatment. This high utilization was attributed to high efficacy, low cost, better taste, less side effects and family trend. **Conclusions:** People at Bahawalpur prefer homeopathic treatment to the allopathic one.

**Key words:** Homeopathic, Diluents, Modality, Placebo.

## INTRODUCTION

Homeopathy began as a part of discovery or its founder "Samuel Hahnemann (1755-843), a German Physician. He first coined the word "Homeopathy" to refer yo "Law of Similar" that is its basis<sup>1</sup>. Min stream medicine criticizes homeopathy by saying that its gentleness has out lined its usefulness and treatment successes are probably no more than placebo action<sup>2</sup>.

In United states of America the food and drug administration agency regulates the manufacture and sale of homeopathic medicines. However most of the homeopathic medicines are available in USA without prescription<sup>3</sup>.

In India lure for homeopathy was quoted as one of the problems faced during education programe in bronchial asthma<sup>4</sup>.

In rural Bangladesh a study which included homeopathic practitioners, found that care of acute diseases as largely irrational<sup>5</sup>.

In Pakistan use of unconventional methods by cancer patients for treatment, wich include homeopathy, were found to be wide spread. This has been shown to result in

conventional treatment which causes inverse influence on survivor<sup>6</sup>.

According to homeopathy if signs and symptoms are suppressed the body becomes to use its self curing system. In case of liquids as alcohol being used as a diluents the drug and alcohol are shaken vigorously. This is called "succussion" the solution thus produced is called "potencies"<sup>7</sup>.

No reasonable person or government outlook the benefits of homeopathic system. Firstly homeopathic medicines are non toxic. Secondly very few visits are required to doctor. Thirdly it is not necessary to go to pathological laboratory. Fourthly cost of medicine is negligible<sup>8</sup>.

## Objectives

To determine factors influencing people's attitude toward homeopathic treatment.

## METHODOLOGY

### Setting

The study was conducted at homeopathic clinics situated as "Zenana Hospital Road Bahawalpur City".

**Duration**

The study was completed from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010 to 30<sup>th</sup> Nov 2010.

**Study design**

It was an descriptive cross sectional epidemiological study.

**Study population**

The study population included the patients seeking treatment at homeopathic clinics situated a Zenana Hospital road Bahawalpur.

**Sample size**

80 subjects attending homeopathic clinics at Zenana Hospital road were included in the study.

**Sampling technique**

Total number of clinics situated at Zanana Hospital road Bahawalpur was 10, but we selected 5 clinics by simple random sampling. So, sample of 16 patients was taken from each by non probability convenience sampling technique.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

The comprehensive analysis of data was carried with the help of computer software SPSS version 10. Frequencies were calculated for different variables. Cross tabulation was prepared for age and treatment preference; socioeconomic status and educations status and treatment preference. The results were tabulated and their statistical significance was done by applying Chi-square test.

**RESULTS**

Out of these total 80 respondents, 87.5% are going to homeopathic clinics every time when they are sick, but 12.5% are those who go to homeopathic clinic only when allopathic treatment fails as shown in table-I.

Number of males preferring homeopathic mode of treatment is more than females as shown in table-I. Frequency of patients preferring homeopathic treatment is more in age group 25-45 as compared to any other age group as is obvious form table-II.

In our study population majority of respondents were belonging to poor class having monthly income less than 5000 Pakistani rupees as shown in table-III.

About 51.25% of respondents preferred homeopathy because of their family background shown in figure-1. The considerable number of respondents in our study population preferred homeopathic treatment because of lack of education as could be seen in table-IV.

Similarly the considerable number of respondents was among those who had preference of homeopathic treatment because of its high efficacy, low cost, better modality taste and free of side effects as sown in fig-1.

Comparison of untoward effects associated with both treatment modalities reveals that a great number of patients suffered side effects because of allopathic treatment (Table-V).

The major determinants of preference of homeopathic treatment n our study are concluded;

1. Lack of education.
2. Poverty.
3. Family background.
4. Low cost of homeopathic medicine.
5. Less side effects of homeopathic medicine than allopathic.
6. Better taste of homeopathic medicine.
7. Efficacy of homeopathic drugs is almost equal to that of allopathic ones.

**DISCUSSION**

Majority of our study population was poorly educated and belonged to poor class in Bahawalpur. Therefore a substantial proportion of respondents (87.5%) used homeopathic modality of treatment for various ailments as compared to allopathic one.

These findings are in contrast to those found in a study conducted in Karachi where the study population was mostly highly educated nd of better socioeconomic status. In that study, only 36% respondents had used services of homeopathic practitioners for various problems. Rest 64% patient visited allopathic clinics thus exhibiting preference for allopathic treatment<sup>9</sup>.

Table-I. Treatment preference by respondents

| Treatment option  | Number of respondents |      |         |      | Total | %age |
|---|-----------------------|------|---------|------|-------|------|
|   | Male                  | %age | Females | %age |       |      |
| Homeopathy  | 52                    | 65.5 | 18      | 22.5 | 70    | 87.5 |
| Allopathy   | 06                    | 7.5  | 04      | 05   | 10    | 12.5 |
| Total   | 58                    | 72.5 | 22      | 27.5 | 80    | 100  |
| <i>Chi square (<math>\chi^2</math>) = .896</i> <i>df = 1</i> <i>P = .344</i> <i>P&gt;0.05 (Non-significant)</i> |                       |      |         |      |       |      |

Table-II. Age distribution of study population

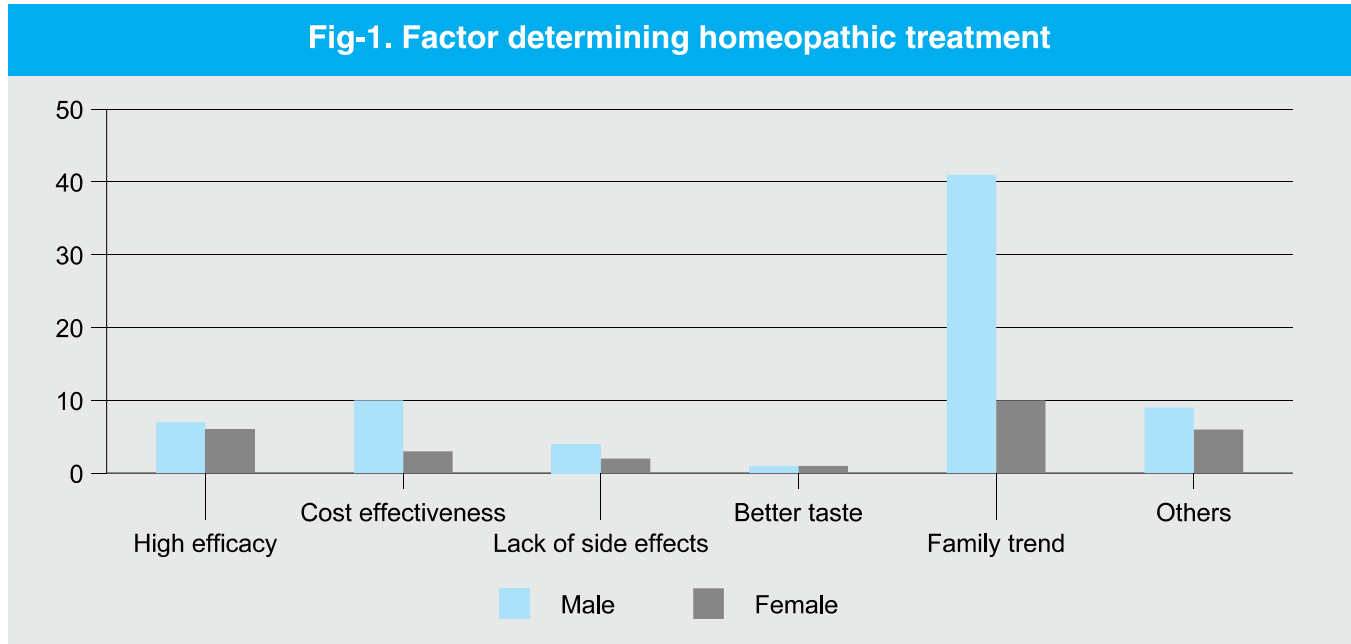
| Age group  | Who preferred homeopathy | Who preferred allopathy | Total | %age |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------|------|
| 5-25   | 08                       | 02                      | 10    | 12.5 |
| 25-45  | 26                       | 04                      | 30    | 37.5 |
| 45-65  | 24                       | 02                      | 26    | 32.5 |
| 65-85  | 12                       | 02                      | 14    | 17.5 |
| Total  | 70                       | 10                      | 80    | 100% |
| <i>Chi square (<math>\chi^2</math>) = 1.124</i> <i>df = 3</i> <i>P = .771</i> <i>P&gt;0.05 (Non-significant)</i> |                          |                         |       |      |

Table-III. Socioeconomic status of respondents

| Socioeconomic status  | Who preferred homeopathy | Who preferred allopathy | Total | %age  |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| Poor class  | 42                       | 02                      | 44    | 55    |
| Middle class  | 20                       | 03                      | 23    | 28.75 |
| Upper class   | 08                       | 05                      | 13    | 16.25 |
| Total   | 70                       | 10                      | 80    | 100   |
| <i>Chi square (<math>\chi^2</math>) = 10.56</i> <i>df = 2</i> <i>P = 0.005</i> <i>P&lt;0.05 (Significant)</i> |                          |                         |       |       |

Table-IV. Educational status of respondents

| Educational status   | Who preferred homeopathy | Who preferred allopathy | Total | %age  |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| Illiterate   | 35                       | 02                      | 37    | 46.25 |
| Matriculation  | 11                       | 02                      | 13    | 16.25 |
| Graduation   | 19                       | 03                      | 22    | 27.5  |
| Post Graduation  | 05                       | 03                      | 08    | 10    |
| Total  | 70                       | 10                      | 80    | 100   |
| <i>Chi square (<math>\chi^2</math>) = 6.39</i> <i>df = 3</i> <i>P = 0.094</i> <i>P&gt;0.05 (Non-significant)</i> |                          |                         |       |       |



**Table-V. Comparison of untoward effects associated with both treatment modalities**

| Treatment Modality      | Allopathy | Homeopathy | Total | %age |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|-------|------|
| More side effects       | 26        | 04         | 30    | 37.5 |
| Less or no side effects | 04        | 46         | 50    | 62.5 |
| Total                   | 30        | 50         | 80    | 100  |

*Chi square (X<sup>2</sup>) = 49.50      df = 1*  
*P = 0.0001      P < 0.05 (Significant)*

According to that study the main reason for consultation with homeopathic practitioners was the recommendations by the friends.

This may be because of satisfactory experiences of the people of that community with services of homeopathic treatment or it could be result of marketing influences.

It is said that drugs used in homeopathy are placebo and need not to be integrated into medical training<sup>10</sup>.

In Belgium the practice of homeopathy is found to be popular especially in general practice because of high efficacy<sup>11</sup>.

In Norway 20% doctors are found to be positive towards homeopathic modality of treatment because of its high efficacy and free of side effect<sup>12</sup>.

It is said that the use of alternative modes of treatment such as homeopathy can be understood as an alternative and satisfying to educated individuals with chronic problems<sup>13</sup>.

According to a study by Chand SK, in Bihar homeopathic medicine is very popular among tribal people of Ranchi, Gumla, Sighbhum and Palaman districts. Dependence of tribal people on homeopathic treatment is mainly due to cheap treatment costs, less side effect and family trend towards homeopathic medicine<sup>14</sup>.

This study also supports our study with almost same reasons of preference of homeopathic treatment to allopathic one in Bahawalpur as the reasons already given principle on which it is based.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Homeopathic treatment is preferred to the allopathic one in the Bahawalpur.

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The first step to getting the things you want out of life is this:  
Decide what you want.

*Ben Stein*