



HYPERTENSION MANAGED WITH HOMOEOPATHIC MEDICINE AND SIDDHA THERAPY: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Hypertension is a global epidemic. It affects people across all income groups, accounts for 3.7% of total disability adjusted life years (DALYS) and is the commonest risk factor for death. Hypertension often does not present with signs and symptoms; however, commonly associated symptoms include early morning headache, nosebleed, irregular heartbeats and buzzing in the ears. Symptoms of severe hypertension may include tiredness, nausea, vomiting, confusion, anxiety, chest pain and muscle tremors. Family history of hypertension combined with unhealthy lifestyle increase the risk for developing high blood pressure. Nearly 60% of diabetics also have high blood pressure. Hypertension is a known risk factor for coronary heart disease, stroke and chronic renal disease. A large number of the hypertensive population is either untreated or inadequately treated with conventional system of medicine and look for alternative systems of medicines. This paper presents a case study of 15 patients suffering from Hypertension at AYUSH wellness clinic, President's Estate treated with Homoeopathic medicine and Siddha therapy.

KEYWORDS: Homoeopathy, Hypertension, Siddha, Varmam.

INTRODUCTION

Hypertension is an epidemic affecting one billion people throughout the world. Indian guidelines published by Association of Physicians of India (API) define hypertension as: "Systolic blood pressure greater than 140 mm Hg and diastolic blood pressure greater than 90 mm Hg or any level of blood pressure in persons on antihypertensive medications." Hypertension has high prevalence; it affects people across all income groups, accounts for 3.7% of total disability adjusted life years (DALYS) and is the commonest risk factor for death. Hypertension is also a major risk factor for coronary heart disease, stroke and chronic renal disease. Nearly 90 percent for men and women who are non hypertensive at 55 or 65 years develop hypertension by the age of 80–85.^[1,2,3]

Hypertension can be hereditary. Family history of hypertension combined with unhealthy lifestyle increase the risk for developing high blood pressure. Behaviour and lifestyle-related factors that increase hypertension risk include eating too much salt (sodium), fewer intakes of fruits and vegetables (potassium), being overweight, not getting enough exercise, as well as alcohol and smoking. Nearly 60% of diabetics also have high blood pressure.^[4]

The classification of blood pressure⁵ for adults age 18 year or older given by API is mentioned in Table 1.

High blood pressure oftentimes does not present with warning signs or symptoms. Hence it is also called the "silent killer". However it may present with early morning headache, nosebleed, irregular heartbeats and buzzing in the ears. Symptoms of severe hypertension may include tiredness, nausea, vomiting, confusion, anxiety, chest pain and muscle tremors⁴. Complications of uncontrolled high blood pressure include heart failure, peripheral vascular disease, renal impairment, retinal haemorrhage and visual impairment. Treating systolic blood pressure and diastolic blood pressure until they are less than 140/90 mmHg is associated with a reduction in cardiovascular complications. Treatment and control of hypertension are critically important for the prevention of consequent cardiovascular and kidney diseases.^[3]

The medication conventionally prescribed for Hypertension include, angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors, angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs), beta-blockers, calcium channel blockers (CCBs) and diuretics either singly or in combination.^[6] However, large segments of the hypertensive population are either untreated or inadequately treated. Besides, a significant number of patients on conventional treatment continue to

have uncontrolled blood pressure and look for alternative systems of medicines. The cost of modern medicine treatment is high and it also has known side effects. With this background, this study reports the efficacy of integrated effect of Homoeopathic medicine and Siddha therapy for Hypertension.

OBJECTIVES

To study the efficacy of combined Homoeopathic medicine and Siddha Varmam therapy in patients suffering from hypertension.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

15 patients reporting to the OPD and willing to be a part of this study were enrolled and followed as per treatment protocol for two months (60 days) for assessing the results of this study.

Inclusion criteria

1. Patients willing to participate in the clinical study.
2. Patients belonging to either sex between the age group 30 to 60 years.
3. Patients having systolic B.P. up to 160 and diastolic B.P. up to 110 will be selected for the study.
4. Patients who will be fit for the clinical trial.

Exclusion criteria

1. Concomitant Hypertension.
2. Pregnancy induced hypertension
3. Drugs like oral contraceptive pills, steroids
4. Ventricular hypertrophy, secondary hypertension, co-arcuation of aorta
5. Portal hypertension.

Patient evaluation: The patient case history was taken as per modified Michigan State University, Hypertension: case history skills.^[7]

1. Demographic details.
2. Presenting complaint.
3. History of presenting complaint including duration & levels of elevated BP as well as employment/psychosocial/environmental factors that may elevate blood pressure.
4. Cardiovascular risk factors and co-morbidities including- Overweight, Excessive alcohol intake, Cigarette smoking, Excess salt intake (>10g/day), Diabetes Mellitus, Dyslipidemia.
5. Family history of- Hypertension, Premature Coronary Artery Disease, Stroke, Cardiovascular Disease, Diabetes mellitus, Dyslipidemia.
6. Drug intake (previous or present): non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, steroids. OCP intake and hypertension during pregnancy in women.
7. Adherence to antihypertensive therapy along with results of previous antihypertensive therapy.

Physical examination: The physical examination included an appropriately directed cardiovascular system evaluation with attention to other systems as indicated.

Study design: Observational clinical study.

Duration of treatment: Sixty days.

Treatment protocol: The patients were asked to continue conventional medicine for High Blood Pressure and Diabetes Mellitus if they have been taking them. Homoeopathic medicine Rauwolfia mother tincture was prescribed in drop doses; 5, 10 or 15 drop twice a day in half cup of drinking water as per the case requirement. Siddha Varmam therapy was given on three varma points; namely- *Sakthi varmam*, *Mun mudichu varmam* and *Munpoonel varmam*. Each varma point was stimulated with pressure mentioned in text and may vary according to patients pirakuruthi (body constitution). Therapeutically the varma points are stimulated gently with the fingers. Pressure varies from ¼ unit, ½ unit, ¾ unit to 1 unit. Depending on the nature of the illness, weight and age of the patient, the application may be pressing, pacing, lifting, braiding, even and gentle clockwise or anticlockwise rotation, pinching, slipping pinch, tapping and gentle stroking.^[8]

Sakthi Varmam

- Located below the collar bone.
- Applied by using Thumb- clockwise and anticlockwise, three times.
- Increases Hb level, strengthens lungs, reduces high blood pressure.^[6]

Mun mudichu Varmam

- Located 3 finger breaths below thummi kaalam.
- Thumb should be placed laterally, and mildly pressed for 3 times.
- Cures achlasia, reduces blood cholesterol and high blood pressure.^[6]

Mun poonel varmam

- Located 3 finger breaths below Mun mudichu Varmam
- Thumb should be placed laterally, and mildly pressed(1/4unit) for 3 times
- Strengthens blood vessels of heart, reduces high blood pressure.^[6]

Along with this, the patients were advised aerobic exercise for 30 minutes every day, dietary sodium restriction of 2.4 grams per day (no more than 6 grams of sodium chloride and avoid alcohol and tobacco. To reduce sodium intake the patients were advised to avoid-table salt; salt preserved foods like pickles and canned foods, ketchups and sauces, ready to eat foods; highly salted foods like peanut butter, potato chips, cheese, salted butter, papad; and bakery products like pastries, breads, cakes and biscuits.^[9]

Assessment criteria: Assessment of change in Blood Pressure by sphygmomanometer and calculation of Mean arterial Pressure (MAP). Mean arterial pressure, is defined as the average pressure in a patient's arteries during one cardiac cycle. It is considered a better indicator of perfusion to vital organs than systolic blood pressure (SBP). The simple way to calculate the patients MAP is to use the following formula: $MAP = [(2 \times \text{diastolic}) + \text{systolic}] \text{ divided by } 3$. The reason that the diastolic value is multiplied by 2, is that the diastolic portion of the cardiac cycle is twice as long as the systolic.^[10]

Statistical Analysis: The information collected on the basis of above observations was subjected to statistical analysis in terms of mean (X), standard deviation (S.D.) and standard error (S.E.) Paired 't' test was carried out at $P > 0.05$, $P < 0.01$ and $P < 0.001$ levels. The obtained results were interpreted as: - Insignificant $P > 0.05$ Significant $P < 0.05$ highly significant $P < 0.01$, $P < 0.001$.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypertension is a global health challenge and the leading preventable risk factor for premature death and disability worldwide.^[3] It exerts a substantial public health burden on healthcare systems in India. Published research has concluded that Hypertension is directly responsible for 57% of all stroke deaths and 24% of all coronary heart disease deaths in India.^[11]

Homeopathy is a holistic system of medicine that believes that body and mind are integrated. This system of medical therapeutics was developed by German physician Dr. Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843). Homoeopathic medicines are prepared from natural substances such as plants, minerals, and animal tissues. They are non-toxic, used in extremely low doses, and can be safely used with infants, children, and adults.^[12] Homoeopathic medicines are regarded as effective and safe treatment for wide number of acute and chronic diseases. The homoeopathic mother tincture used as BP lowering agent in this study is made from a perennial shrub from the Apocynaceae family.^[13]

Rauwolfia serpentine also known as sarpagandha and chandrika has been known to reduce blood pressure since antiquity and was mentioned in Indian manuscripts as long ago as 1000 BC.^[13] Rauwolfia contains many different phytochemicals, including glycosides, fatty acids, flavonoids, phytosterols, oleoresins, steroids, tannins, and alkaloids. Published research has shown that the BP lowering effect of Rauwolfia is attributed to presence of reserpine alkaloid.^[14,15] The homoeopathic proving of this medicine was made and published in British Homoeopathic Journal by Dr. W. Templeton in the year 1955.^[16] Standard homoeopathic repertories including Synthesis repertory and Murphy's repertory have described Rauwolfia serpentine as a medicine for hypertension.^[17,18]

Published studies have reported the efficacy of homoeopathic preparation of Rauwolfia in hypertension and dyslipidemia.^[19,20] Rastogi et al (1996) in their study prescribed Rauwolfia serpentina in 1x potency (2 pinch in half a cup of water orally given 3 times a day) to 52 patients suffering from essential hypertension. As clinical improvement in blood pressure (BP) progressed, the repetition of medicine was reduced to twice and then to once daily. BP measurement showed reduction in 42 patients subsequent to treatment. Further, 22 patients who were under allopathic treatment were able to tapered off slowly withdraw from allopathic medicines.^[19] Another prospective observational study on hyperlipoproteinemia (n=322 patients) reported blood pressure lowering effect of Rauwolfia mother tincture prescribed 10 drops thrice a day to 10 patients of whom 7 improved. The parameters used in this study were when patient is asymptomatic, lipid profile touched normal level, and there is no recurrence for 3 years.^[20]

Siddha is one of the ancient indigenous Indian System of medicine. Varmam is a unique therapeutic method of Siddha. From ages it has been developed and used as martial or defensive art and also in medical healing practice. According to sara nool, Human body consists of a vital energy to the whole body. This circulation is called as 'Varma energy circulation' (Sara Ottam) and the energy that passes through is called as Saram or Vaasi. Thasanadis are the vital energy channels by which the energy circulation takes place. The energy that passes will retained, stored and transmitted in certain areas or points of human body and the points are called as varmam points or vital points.^[21]

The term Varmam also indicates the therapeutic manipulation of specific points in which the pranic energy is found concentrated. Manipulation over these points with a particular force for the specific time will release the pranic energy from these points and brings relief to the affected individual. Varma is a complete natural healing system where therapy time is less, non invasive, simple and effective, drugless and it has long lasting results.^[22] In Siddha, Hypertension is considered as Athikuruthiazhutham, abnormality of Seneer thathu (blood element).^[23] An observational study conducted among 10 patients suffering from Hypertension reported significant improvement (n=1) in systolic and diastolic BP measurements after 48 days of *varma* therapy point stimulation.^[24]

In the present study, the mean age (\pm SD) of the patients was 49.27 ± 8.66 years and the mean duration of complaints (\pm SD) was 84.80 ± 50.80 months. Majority of the patients (80%) were suffering from Hypertension stage II at baseline as per the API classification. The Mean BMI of men in this study was 26.26 while that of women was 27.42. Among the study group, 6 (40%) of the patients were on conventional anti-hypertensive drugs with uncontrolled BP at baseline while 2 (13.3%) of the patients were on conventional anti-diabetic drugs.

The patient characteristics are described in Table 2 and 3. Homoeopathic medicine Rauwolfia mother tincture was prescribed in drop doses; 5, 10 or 15 drop twice a day in half cup of drinking water as per the case requirement along with Siddha Varmam therapy for 60

days. Patients reported significant improvement in Systolic BP ($P<0.001$), Diastolic BP ($P<0.001$) as well as Mean Arterial Pressure ($P<0.001$) from baseline to 60 days after treatment (Table 4).

Table 1: Classification of blood Pressure for adults age 18 year or older.

Category	Systolic (mm Hg)	Diastolic (mm Hg)
Optimal [‡]	< 120 and	< 80
Normal	<130 and	<85
High Normal	130-139 or	85-89
Hypertension ^{**}		
Hypertension stage I	140-159 or	90-99
Hypertension stage 2	160-179 or	100-109
Hypertension stage 3	≥ 180 or	≥ 110
Isolated Systolic Hypertension		
Grade I	140-159 and	<90
Grade II	≥ 160 or	<90

[‡] Unusually low readings should be evaluated for clinical significance.

^{**} Based on average of 2 or more BP readings taken at least on 2 visits after initial screening.

Table 2: Demographic details.

CHARACTERISTICS	N=15
Mean age \pm SD (range)	49.27 \pm 8.66
Male (%)	8 (53.3%)
Female (%)	7 (46.7%)
Duration of complaints in months \pm SD (range)	84.80 \pm 50.80 (12-180)
Hypertension stage I	3 (20%)
Hypertension stage II	12 (80%)
Hypertension stage III	-

Table 3: Baseline characteristics of patients.

CHARACTERISTICS	N=15 (%)	
Smoking status	Never smoked	9 (60%)
	Still smoking	4 (26.7%)
	Quit smoking	2 (13.3%)
Weight	Mean weight of men (in Kg)	73.31
	Mean weight of women (in Kg)	67.41
Height	Mean height of men (in cm)	167.38
	Mean height of women (in cm)	156.71
BMI	Mean BMI of men	26.26
	Mean BMI of women	27.42
Family history	Hypertension	8 (53.3%)
	Diabetes	6 (40%)
	Both hypertension and diabetes	5 (33.3%)
	Cardiovascular Disease	2 (13.3%)
Concomitant conventional medicine intake	Anti-hypertensive drugs	6 (40%)
	Anti-diabetic drugs	2 (13.3%)

Table 4: Assessment before and after 60 days of treatment (n=15).

Assessment criteria	Mean			S.E.	T value	P value
	B.T.	A.T.	Diff.			
Systolic BP	149.93 \pm 6.81	126 \pm 7.37	-23.93	2.591	-9.236	$P<0.0001$
Diastolic BP	102 \pm 8.62	81.73 \pm 6.50	-20.27	2.788	-7.272	$P<0.0001$
Mean arterial pressure	253.98 \pm 17.69	205.47 \pm 13.59	-48.51	5.760	-8.422	$P<0.0001$

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

While the results of this study are promising, this is essentially a preliminary study due to small sample size. Clinical study with larger sample size and longer follow up duration may be undertaken to further validate the results of this study.

CONCLUSION

Combined Homoeopathic medicine and Siddha Varmam therapy is effective in patients suffering from hypertension and warrant further studies with more stringent criteria.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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