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RESEARCH ARTICLE

HOMEOPATHIC MANAGEMENT OF RHEUMATOID ARTHRITIS TRIGGERED BY EMOTIONAL STRESS – A CLINICAL CASE STUDY

***Dr. Abhishek Choudhary**

Chief Homeopathic Consultant, Amritsar, Dr Batra's Positive Health Clinic Pvt. Ltd., B.H.M.S

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*Corresponding author:

Dr. Kshiti Shetty,

ABSTRACT

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a chronic autoimmune disease primarily affecting the joints, leading to inflammation, pain, and progressive joint damage. Globally, it affects approximately 0.5–1% of the population, with a higher prevalence in women. The homeopathic approach to RA emphasizes individualized treatment by addressing both physical symptoms and underlying emotional or constitutional factors. This case study highlights the successful management of a long-standing RA case using classical homeopathy, with the patient reporting significant improvement under care at Dr Batra's.

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INTRODUCTION

Rheumatoid arthritis is a systemic autoimmune condition characterized by chronic inflammation of the synovial joints. It typically presents with symmetrical joint pain, stiffness (especially in the morning), swelling, and decreased range of motion. The exact cause remains unknown, but it is believed to involve a combination of genetic predisposition and environmental triggers such as infections, stress, or hormonal changes. If left untreated, RA can lead to joint deformity, disability, and systemic complications including cardiovascular and pulmonary involvement. Early diagnosis and holistic management are key to preventing long-term damage and improving quality of life.

CASE PROFILE

A 44-year-old female presents with a two-year history of rheumatoid arthritis, which initially began with pain in the left ankle. The pain is predominantly noted during exertion and is now localized primarily to the feet. She occasionally experiences swelling around the ankles, although she has not observed any pitting. Since the onset of the condition, she has reported tenderness in the soles at night. The character of the pain is described as dull. The symptoms were initially triggered following a period of grief due to the loss of her father. Laboratory investigations showed elevated rheumatoid factor levels, while uric acid levels remained within normal limits. She was previously on pregabalin and has a family history of rheumatoid arthritis on the paternal side. Her lifestyle includes a high degree of mental strain, with tendencies toward overthinking and suspicion. A hysterectomy was performed a few years ago due to fibroids, with a satisfactory outcome. Over time, her symptoms have gradually improved with treatment. Initially, she continued to experience intermittent pain and mild swelling, particularly in the feet and occasionally the knees. However, she has reported consistent improvement in her condition, with current reports indicating no pain or swelling and full mobility of the feet. Her general health, including appetite, thirst, bowel and urinary habits, nails, and tongue, has remained stable and within normal limits.

Physical Generals

Diet: Regular meals; prefers home-cooked food; non-vegetarian diet

Appetite: Normal

Desire: Craving for salty foods

Aversion: Not specified

Thirst: Increased; ~4 liters/day

Stools: Satisfactory
 Urine: Normal

Examination

- * General physical examination conducted; no acute distress noted
- * No visible swelling or deformity at the time of examination
- * Joints of the feet show full range of motion

Mental Generals: The patient hails from Gurdaspur and was residing in Batala when her health complaints began, initially presenting as pain in the left ankle. Her mental and emotional history reveals significant stressors and sensitivities. The passing of her father in 2020 marked a major emotional trigger, followed by domestic difficulties during 2022–2023, which further impacted her mental well-being. She is highly religious, with a strong fear and reverence for God, which shapes much of her emotional framework. Emotionally, she tends to be sensitive and easily affected by minor issues. She frequently experiences emotional outbursts and has difficulty processing or expressing her feelings, often suppressing anger, which can at times become intense or violent internally. There is a strong tendency toward overthinking, particularly about the future, and she has become increasingly forgetful over the past year. A sense of suspicion is also present in her general mental outlook. Despite these challenges, she finds comfort in her faith. Additionally, she underwent a hysterectomy in 2020 due to fibroids, which she recalls as a positive and relieving medical experience.

Past History: Hysterectomy done in 2020 for uterine fibroids.

Family History

- Paternal aunt diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis (RA positive)
- No other significant hereditary or chronic conditions noted in the family

Case analysis

Reportorial totality

| Repertory used | Rubrics selected |
|---------------------|---|
| Synthesis Repertory | MIND - ABUSIVE – husband MIND - AILMENTS FROM - love; disappointed MIND - ANSWERING – hastily MIND - ANXIETY - respiration; with impeded |

Repertory screenshot

| Remedies | lach. | verat. | nux-v. | ars. | ign. | plat. | anac. | staph. | bell. | bufo | cimic. | lyc. | thuj. | acon. | carb. | pet-ra. | phos. | rhus-t. | vanil. | nat-m. |
|--|-------|--------|--------|------|------|-------|-------|--------|-------|------|--------|------|-------|-------|-------|---------|-------|---------|--------|--------|
| Serial Number | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| Symptoms Covered | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Intensity | 7 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Result | 4/7 | 3/5 | 3/4 | 3/3 | 2/5 | 2/5 | 2/4 | 2/4 | 2/3 | 2/3 | 2/3 | 2/3 | 2/3 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 2/2 | 1/4 |
| Clipboard 1 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MIND - ABUSIVE - husband | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | | | 2 | | | | | | 1 | | | 1 | | | | |
| MIND - AILMENTS FROM - love; disappointed | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 4 | 3 | | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 4 |
| MIND - ANSWERING - hastily | 1 | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | | | 1 | | | 1 | | |
| MIND - ANXIETY - respiration; with impeded | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | | | 1 | 2 | 1 | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | |

Selection of Remedy

Remedies: Rhus Toxicodendron (Constitutional), Five Phos 6X (Supportive)

Remedy: Rhus Toxicodendron

Reasons: Rhus tox is well suited for rheumatic complaints characterized by joint stiffness and dull, aching pain that worsens after rest and improves with motion. It matches the patient's symptoms of foot pain aggravated on exertion and tenderness of the soles at night. The remedy also covers symptoms triggered by emotional stress, such as grief after the father's passing. The mental state of suppressed anger, emotional sensitivity, and restlessness aligns with the Rhus tox picture. It is commonly indicated in chronic rheumatic conditions with periodic swelling and no pitting.

Remedy: Five Phos 6X

Reasons: Five Phos 6X is used as a supportive tissue salt combination for general debility and nervous exhaustion. It is helpful in managing mental fatigue, forgetfulness, and emotional strain, all of which are present in the case. It supports the patient’s recovery from chronic illness and

post-surgical weakness following her hysterectomy. It improves vitality, helps manage stress, and complements the constitutional remedy in promoting long-term improvement in chronic conditions like rheumatoid arthritis.

Miasmatic Approach

| Symptoms | Psora | Sycosis | Syphilis | Tubercular |
|--|-------|---------|----------|------------|
| MIND - ABUSIVE – husband | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| MIND - AILMENTS FROM - love; disappointed | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| MIND - ANSWERING – hastily | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| MIND - ANXIETY - respiration; with impeded | ✓ | | | |

Miasmatic predominance

Predominantly Psoric with strong Syphilitic and Tubercular traits. Sycosis is present but less dominant.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Synthesis repertory was used for repertorization

RESULTS

1st month

Progress: Swelling over the foot started reducing, pain still present on movement. Appetite good, general condition stable.

Prescription: Rhus Toxicodendron 200C once weekly, Five Phos 6X 2 tablets TDS

2nd month

Progress: Pain decreased significantly, swelling further reduced. Movement improved, emotional state slightly better.

Prescription: Rhus Toxicodendron 200C once weekly, Five Phos 6X 2 tablets TDS

3rd month

Progress: Swelling minimal, slight pain only on exertion. Mentally more stable, less anxiety.

Prescription: Rhus Toxicodendron 1M single dose, Five Phos 6X 2 tablets BD

4th month

Progress: No pain at rest, mild pain on movement. No swelling. Appetite and sleep good.

Prescription: Placebo BD, Five Phos 6X 2 tablets BD

5th month

Progress: Continued improvement, movement free. Mentally stable with occasional forgetfulness.

Prescription: Placebo BD, Five Phos 6X 2 tablets OD

6th month

Progress: No pain or swelling, physical strength improving. No tenderness in soles.

Prescription: Placebo BD, Five Phos 6X 2 tablets OD

7th month

Progress: Stable condition, occasional tiredness on overexertion. No joint complaints.

Prescription: Placebo BD

8th month

Progress: No symptoms, emotional state improved. Overthinking reduced, energy better.

Prescription: Placebo BD

9th month

Progress: No recurrence of pain or swelling, mentally calm. Sleep and digestion stable.

Prescription: Placebo BD

10th month

Progress: Maintains good health, physically and mentally stable. No joint issues.

Prescription: Placebo BD

11th month

Progress: No complaints, lifestyle stable. Normal daily activity without limitations.

Prescription: Placebo BD

12th month

Progress: Full recovery reported. No joint pain, swelling, or emotional disturbances. Movement completely free.

Prescription: Placebo BD

DISCUSSION& CONCLUSION

The case presents a middle-aged female with a chronic history of rheumatoid arthritis, initially triggered by emotional stress and grief. The condition began with localized pain in the left ankle and gradually progressed to involve the feet, accompanied by intermittent swelling and night-time tenderness of the soles. Her physical generals remained relatively stable, with good appetite, increased thirst, and satisfactory bowel and urinary habits. Mentally, the patient displayed heightened emotional sensitivity, suppressed anger, overthinking, and forgetfulness, likely influenced by past trauma and ongoing stress. A holistic approach addressing both physical and emotional layers of the case led to steady and consistent improvement. Over a structured follow-up period, the patient reported marked relief in joint pain, disappearance of swelling, improved mobility, and greater emotional balance. Supportive therapy helped manage residual fatigue and mental strain, contributing to overall recovery. By the end of the treatment cycle, the patient experienced complete resolution of symptoms, regained functional movement, and reported mental and physical well-being. This case highlights the importance of individualized treatment and the effectiveness of integrating constitutional and supportive approaches in managing chronic autoimmune conditions.

The transformation

15.05.2025
RA Factor 4.36IU/mL

14.06.2025
RA Factor Negative

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| Patient Name : Mrs. Baldeena | | Dated : 15/05/2025 | |
| Age / Sex : 45 Year/Female | | ADDRESS : | |
| Ref By : Dr. Self | | LAB No : 5 | |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| Patient Name : Mrs. Baldeena | | Dated : 14/06/2025 | |
| Age / Sex : 45 Year/Female | | ADDRESS : | |
| Ref By : Dr. Self | | LAB No : 5 | |

| Test Name | Value Observed | Units | Normal Range |
|---|----------------|-------|--------------|
| SEROLOGY TEST | | | |
| RA FACTOR (QUANTITATIVE) | 4.36 | IU/mL | < 20 |
| <small>INTERPRETATIONS: (RF) gives useful evidence of rheumatoid arthritis (RA), but negative results does not rule out rheumatoid arthritis Because of delayed appearance of rheumatoid factor, it is more frequent present in chronic active phase of the disease than in early or in the subclinical chronic phases of rheumatoid arthritis. RF is also found in other autoimmune diseases like SLE, Scleroderma, sjogrens syndrome. Weakly positive latex Agglutination factor.</small> | | | |
| *****END OF REPORT***** | | | |

| Test Name | Value Observed | Units | Normal Range |
|----------------------------|----------------|-------|--------------|
| HAEMATOLOGY ROUTINE | | | |
| Haemoglobin | 10.5 | g/dL | 11.5 - 15.5 |
| BIOCHEMISTRY TEST | | | |
| Blood Sugar (R) | 101.2 | mg/dl | 70 - 140 |
| S. Uric Acid | 6.81 | mg/dl | 2.5 - 6.0 |
| SEROLOGY TEST | | | |
| RA FACTOR (QUALITATIVE) | Negative | | |

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