

MANAGEMENT OF POST-OPERATIVE BREAST NODULES WITH HOMOEOPATHY: A EVIDENCE BASED CASE REPORT (ONCOLOGY)

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ABSTRACT :

The palpable lump or masses is the most common presentation of recurrent disease after mastectomy (96%). Many benign post-mastectomy lesions can result in palpable masses. These include mainly post-operative fluid collections such as seroma, haematoma and abscesses; scar tissue; normal axillary lymph nodes and fat necrosis.

In localised breast tumours, even though after the removal of cancerous tissue, the patients are considered to be relatively free from cancer and its metastasis, the resultant lump can be very discomfoting and a cause of pain and concern for the patients. This is a case of breast nodules occurring after the removal of cancerous tissue in the breast. Homoeopathy, with its holistic approach, can treat the disease by addressing its multifactorial origin.

A 71-year-old female, diagnosed with post-operative breast nodules after surgical excision of mucinous carcinoma portion of the left breast, was treated with individualised homoeopathic treatment for six months with subsequent improvement. This case provides preliminary evidence for the potential usefulness of homoeopathy as an alternative therapy for the treatment of breast nodules.

CASE SUMMARY:

A 58 years-old female from pangode, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India, on June 17, 2023, and presented with a complaint of breast nodule in her left breast with serous, offensive discharge aggravated since one month. On July 4, 2011, the patient

was diagnosed with mucinous carcinoma of the left breast. Soon after, she underwent surgical excision of a small mass in her left breast. She was not on any medication after the excision, but gradually, she noticed a regrowth of the mass within a year of excision.

Subsequently, in August 2013, the patient observed multiple small masses at the site of excision, which prompted her to visit a surgeon who advised a full body PET scan. However, the PET scan was not done as the patient was anxious about this elaborate procedure, as well as wanted to avoid this expenditure due to financial problems. The case was then left unattended until May 2023, when she noticed increased swelling in a tumorous mass in her left breast, with speedy growth in the mass within a month, accompanied by ulceration on its surface.

The patient reported that all the symptoms like accelerated growth accompanied by serous, offensive discharge from the small ulcer site and a swelling in her left axilla, had aggravated since one month. She also complained of offensive sweat in the axilla. There were redness and pitting of the skin over her breast. There was violent and stinging chest pain and cough with yellow, muco-purulent lumpy expectoration. The patient also had pain in both knee joints, which was ameliorated by Cold Exposure. In addition, she had complaints of xeroderma pigmentosum on the soles of feet.

The patient had a history of Diabetes Mellitus, High blood pressure for the past 10–12 years and Osteoarthritis for the past six years for which she was taking conventional medication

CLINICAL FINDINGS :

On examination, the affected breast was asymmetrical, with peeling, scaling and crusting, along with a flaking pigmented area surrounding the nipple and areola. On palpation, no palpable masses or lymph nodes were found other than in the breast tissue. There was an excessively suppurating tumorous mass in the lower outer quadrant of the left breast, resulting from 2 to 3 nodules coalesced together.

The patient was oversensitive to all external impressions. She used to feel depressed and anxious about her illness, and her family informed that it was hard to

convince her of the possibility of recovery. She did not seem to be willing to listen to anyone about it and had fixed ideas about her illness. She felt exhausted and could not focus on day-to-day stuff. She had a weeping tendency in front of everyone and also had fear of needles. She liked company and her anger was ameliorated by consolation. Her complaints were aggravated by lying on the left side and in cold weather. The patient had a desire for sweets and pickles.

DIAGNOSTIC ASSESMENT:

The ultrasonography of the left breast dated December 27, 2022, revealed a large, ill-defined dermal-based soft tissue mass ($5.9 \times 5.5 \times 4.1$ cm) present in the lower quadrant of the left breast, with suspicious, deep infiltration. Rest of the breast showed normal fibrofatty and glandular parenchymal echotexture. The nipple-areolar complex and retro-areolar region were normal. No ductal dilatation, parenchymal calcification or intra-substance lymph nodes were seen. Underlying ribs, pectoralis muscle and superficial fascia were also normal. No significant lymphadenopathy was seen in the left axillary region

TOTALITY OF SYMPTOMS

- Fixed ideas
- Prostration of mind
- Oversensitive to all external impressions
- Yellowish green expectoration with mucous
- Swelling of left breast
- Painful breast; aggravation from cold, lying on the left side; amelioration from warm and wet application
- Breast affection is ulcerative in nature and the discharge was offensive
- Eruptions over the affected part of the chest were scaly and yellowish discoloration of nipples and areola
- Stinging pain in the breast
- Offensive perspiration of axillae

- The complaints were radiating in nature
- Mucoid expectoration

REPERTORIAL ANALYSIS

- Mind; anxiety; weeping; amel.
- Mind; Prostration of mind
- Mind; Sensitive; oversensitive; external impressions to all
- Chest; cancer; painful; mammae; left
- Chest; ulceration of mammae;
- Chest; pain; mammae; extending to back.
- Chest; swelling; mammae; left
- Extremities; Pain; Knees

Symptoms list:

1. CHEST, CANCER, mammae, ...
2. CHEST, CANCER, mammae, epithelioma
3. CHEST, PAIN, mammae, extending to, back
4. CHEST, SWELLING, mammae, ...
5. CHEST, ULCERATION, of mammae, ...
6. EXTREMITIES, PAIN, knee, ...
7. MIND, ANXIETY, weeping, amel.
8. MIND, PROSTRATION of mind, mental exhaustion, brain, ...
9. MIND, SENSITIVE (oversensitive), external impressions, to all

Remedies list:

1. Phos || Phosphorus|| S:7 R:15
2. Sil || Silica terra|| S:6 R:15
3. Con || Conium maculatum|| S:5 R:13
4. Lach || Lachesis muta|| S:6 R:12
5. Calc || Calcarea carbonica Hahnemanni|| S:6 R:11
6. Sulph || Sulphur|| S:6 R:11
7. Phyt || Phytolacca decandra|| S:5 R:11
8. Clem || Clematic erecta|| S:6 R:9
9. Hep || Hepar sulphuris calcareum|| S:5 R:9
10. Merc || Mercurius solubilis Hahnemanni|| S:5 R:9
11. Ars-i || Arsenicum iodatum|| S:5 R:8
12. Bell || Belladonna|| S:4 R:9
13. Bufo || Bufo rana|| S:4 R:8
14. Lyc || Lycopodium clavatum|| S:4 R:8
15. Nit-ac || Nitricum acidum|| S:4 R:8
16. Puls || Pulsatilla nigricans|| S:4 R:8
17. Sep || Sepia succus|| S:4 R:8
18. Arn || Arnica montana|| S:5 R:6
19. Ars || Arsenicum album|| S:4 R:7
20. Cham || Chamomilla vulgaris|| S:5 R:6
21. Graph || Graphites naturalis|| S:4 R:7
22. Psor || Psorinum|| S:4 R:7
23. Apis || Apis mellifica|| S:4 R:6
24. Bry || Bryonia alba|| S:4 R:6
25. Carb-an || Carbo animalis|| S:4 R:6

THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION

FIRST PRESCRIPTION:

Based on the Similimum and according to the Totality of symptoms and Repertorial analysis:

1. Silicea Terra 30/ 3 Doses (Alternate Morning)
2. Calcarea Sulphurica 6X (4-4-4)

FOLLOW-UP AND OUTCOMES :

DATE OF PRESCRIPTION	SYMPTOMS	PRESCRIPTION
17 June 2023 Baseline visit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swelling and growth of the mass in the left breast, development of surface ulceration on the breast mass with serous and offensive discharge, swelling in the left armpit (left axilla) with offensive sweating in axillary region; redness and pitting of the skin over the affected breast, violent and stinging chest pain • On examination: affected breast was asymmetrical; peeling, scaling and crusting of the breast skin, flaking pigmented area around the nipple and areola, four to five masses in the breast with suppurating tumour in the lower 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Silicea Terra 30/ 3 Doses (Alternate Morning) 2. Calcarea sulphurica 6X, (4-4-4)

	outer quadrant of the left breast	
09 August 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection of pus, which turned bloody. One tumour mass came out. Ulcer cavity showed healing and the remaining tumours with oedema and crusting conditions with reduction in size. • However, other enlarged and swollen tumours with breast soreness continue to be present. Tumour had the appearance of lumpy, yellowish scabs, with purulent, pus-like exudation underneath the scabs. • Livid redness and pitting over the tumorous mass and around the ulcer. • Pain radiated to the left arm and axilla, worse in motion. Anxious weeping over the fear of misfortune. 	<p>1. Silicea Terra 30/ 3 Doses (Alternate Morning)</p> <p>2. Calcarea sulphurica 6X, (4-4-4)</p>
03 October 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ulcer left behind by expulsion of one of the nodule mass healed now, bringing relief from pain, swelling, redness and skin pitting. 	<p>1. Silicea Terra 30/ 3 Doses (Alternate Morning)</p> <p>2. Calcarea sulphurica 6X, (4-4-4)</p>
14 December 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no inflammation and pitting of skin and the overall condition continued to get better. 	<p>1. Silicea Terra 30/ 3 Doses (Alternate Morning)</p>

	However, the other 4 masses continued to be present without pain and inflammation	2. Calcarea sulphurica 6X, (4-4-4)
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The Modified Naranjo Criteria for Homoeopathy (MONARCH) – SCALE:

The Modified Naranjo Criteria for Homoeopathy (MONARCH) score was used to evaluate the causal attribution of the clinical outcome to homoeopathic medicine. The score of +8 indicated a probable causal relationship between the prescribed medicine and the treatment outcome. The patient was in a healthy state overall, and had no health related issues that needed attention she follow the medications till now.

TREATMENT PROGRESS IN EVIDENCE BASED



CONCLUSION :

The present case report suggests that homoeopathic treatment may offer potential benefits for managing cases of post-operative breast nodule as palliative method. The use of Homoeopathic Medicine, in this case, demonstrates its effectiveness as a non-invasive alternative to surgical intervention, in accordance with its purported action of facilitating the expulsion of the tumorous mass. Thus, it has been demonstrated that Homoeopathy is an effective method for treating surgical cases like post-operative breast nodule. Further researches are going on day to day.

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