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## **ROLE OF *HOMEOPATHY* IN THE MANAGEMENT OF ACNE**

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### **Abstract**

Nowadays acne is a common disease reported in the teenage population. *Propionibacterium acnes* and *Staphylococcus epidermidis* are responsible for the development of various forms of *acne vulgaris*. Acne is a chronic, inflammatory skin condition resulting in pimples and spot formation on the face, shoulders, back, neck, chest, and upper arms. It has both inflammatory (papules, pustules and nodules) and non-inflammatory (comedones, open and closed) lesions. In acne there occur involvements of the oil glands at the base of hair follicles. It can occur at any age but commonly seen at the time of puberty, when the sebaceous glands get activated. Sebaceous glands produce oil, on stimulation by male hormones which are produced by the adrenal glands in both males and female body. *Acne vulgaris* affects both self-esteem and psychosocial development of the person. Treatment of acne can be done by some therapies such as topical, systemic, hormonal, herbal and combination therapy. In many cases, conventional treatment fails and the patients become helpless. *Homeopathic* medicine has shown a significant popularity among people seeking treatment for acne.

**Keywords:-** *Acne vulgaris*, *Homeopathic*, Sebaceous, Inflammatory

## INTRODUCTION

The term acne is derived from Greek word “*acme*” meaning “prime of life”. *Acne vulgaris* is a chronic disease characterized by seborrhoea (red skin), non-inflammatory (open and closed comedones), inflammatory lesions (papules, pustules, and nodules) and sometimes leads to scar formation also occurs. Its prevalence in adolescents is reported between 28.9-93.3% .It usually begins in the after ten years of age and lasts for 5-10 years. It may persist in adulthood also.Its prevalence is equally reported in male and female. Globally, 650 million people are suffering from acne. According to WHO specific prevalence of acne vulgaris was 9.4% which was more than any skin disease (except fungal infections and viral warts).

Exact etiology of this disease is unknown, but its pathogenesis is multifactorial often associated with *Propionibacterium* infection, chronic inflammatory reactions, abnormal follicular keratinization and hyper secretion of sebaceous glands. Sometimes hormones like androgens, progesterone also stimulate the excess release of sebum thus breaking cellular wall and promoting growth of bacteria's. Family history of acne, high glycemic load and unhealthy diet can be considered as important exciting factors. Although acne is not a life-threatening disease but it can have detrimental effects on the quality of life of affected individuals.

At such young age majority of patients have less patience.They go for easily accessible allopathic treatments to get fast results. But in most cases this approach is not able to cure such a chronic disease permanently in a short time and eruptions reappear as soon as patient stops the treatment.There are many side effects on skin at such young age and such treatments are also costly. Therefore one always look for the harmless approach. To give the best result *Homoeopathy* fills all the requirements of the patients. According to principles of *Homoeopathy* remedy should be prescribed on individualistic approach.

Some recognized types of acne are mentioned in **Figure 1**.Various forms of acne on the basis of severity and inflammatory origin are as following :-

- ❖ **Whiteheads** – They are non inflammatory small pimples that remain under the skin. They are formed due to enlarged hair follicles and are also known as Closed Comedo. They occur on face.

- ❖ **Blackheads** – They are non inflammatory mild lesion of black or dark brown colour which is clearly visible on the surface of the skin. Also known as Open Comedo.
- ❖ **Papules**- These are inflammatory lesion which is mostly pink in colour, solid and tender. They are moderate type of lesion mostly occurs on face,chest as rounded bumps.
- ❖ **Pustules** – These are pus filled inflammatory lesions. They are moderate lesions with red base and pus on the top. Found on face, chest as well as back.
- ❖ **Nodules** – This is severe inflammatory condition of acne. They are large, painful and embedded deep in the skin.
- ❖ **Cysts** –They are also filled with pus and are usually painful which mainly results in scarring.



**Figure 1:-Some types of Acne**

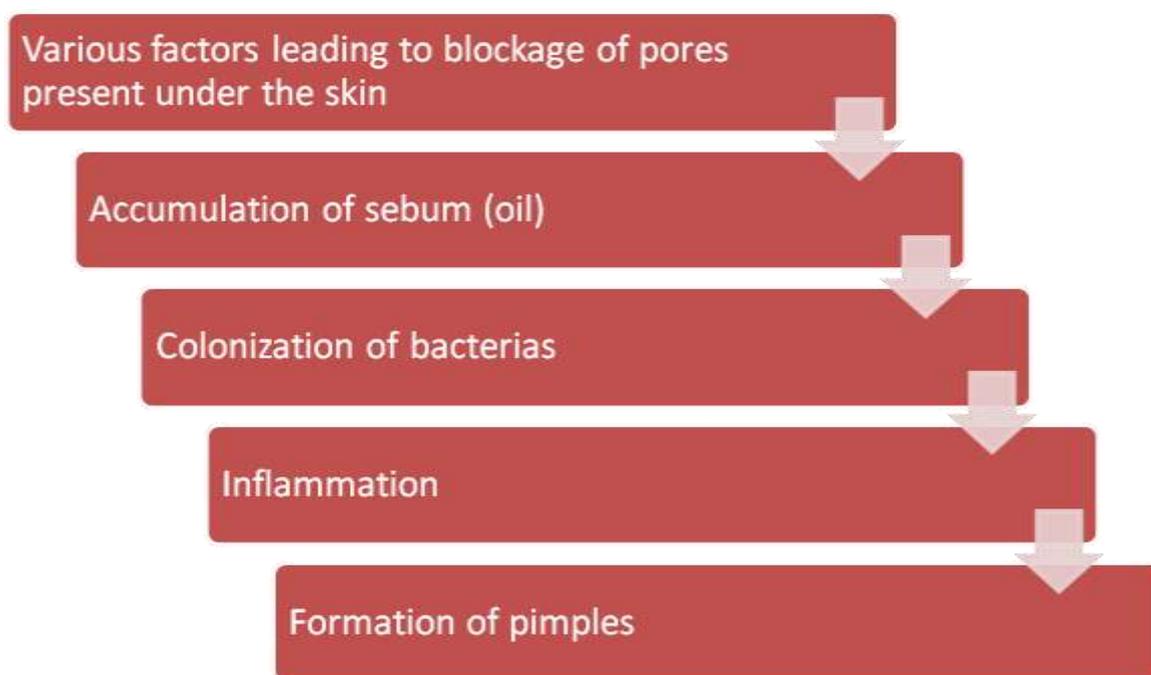
### **Causes of Acne**

Nobody is completely sure about the exact cause of acne. It is considered as the multifactorial condition. One of the main causes of acne is increase in the androgens that occurs in boys as well as girls during puberty. These hormones cause the enlargement of gland which results in increased production of sebum (oil). Pimples grow when the hair follicles get blocked, and oil gets stored under the skin. Hormone changes during pregnancy may also cause acne. *Propionibacterium acnes* bacteria colonize under the skin and it contributes to the infection of pimples. Acne increases in menses, PCOD, hypothyroidism, Cushing syndrome, and menopause. Genetic factors, high glycemic food, diet rich in sugar, milk products, emotional stress can trigger

formation of acne. Oil based makeups, moisturizing creams; lubricating lotions and greasy hair also cause acne. Some medicines used as birth control pills also result in acne.

### Pathophysiology of Acne

Human skin has pores which connect oil glands present under the skin. Follicles help in connecting the glands to the pores. Sebaceous glands produce sebum. Sebaceous glands produce sebum. Sebum carries dead skin cells through the follicles to the surface of the skin. A small hair grows through the follicle out of the skin. Excessive secretion of oils from the sebaceous glands leads to the plugging of pores with dead skin cells ultimately blocking the hair follicles. Due to blockage oil gets accumulated beneath the surface which provides a perfect environment for skin bacteria *Propionibacterium Acne*. After bacterial infection inflammation occurs and different lesions are seen on face, chest, back etc as mentioned in **Figure 2**. Rising androgen levels in the teenagers also cause the oil glands to grow. This enlarged gland produces more sebum. Excessive sebum can break down cellular walls of the pores thus helping bacteria to grow and causing formation of pimples.



**Figure 2: Pathophysiology of formation of Acne**

## Treatment

*Homeopathy* focuses both on causative and symptomatic treatment for the acne. It works to control the infection and hormonal disturbances which results in acne. Medicines are given to control the accumulation of excessive oils on skin, to reduce the scar formation, hyperpigmentation. Following drugs are used to treat acne in a patient:-

- ❖ ***Pulsatilla***- This is one of the most prominent remedy in *Homeopathy* for treating acne in young girls. Due to the irregularity in menses and various hormonal problems during puberty, acne problems are most common. It also gets worse by eating fatty and oily food. Thus *Pulsatilla* is very helpful for those who are not able to digest fatty foods. It is well suggested for the patients having soft emotions, light mood and those who feel good in fresh, open air.
- ❖ ***Silicea (silicon)*** -This is suggested for the patients who suffer from low immunity, fatigue, swollen lymph nodes and has deep, pus containing acne which turns worst in cold weather. Patient feels cold during daytime but will be sweaty in night. It is suggested for treating all types of skin problems and especially cystic acne.
- ❖ ***Psorinum***-This is given to patients who have excessive oily skin, with pustular type acne. Patients may have coffee addiction, will have desire towards fatty, oily, sugary food and after taking such types of food the condition gets worse. Patient will notice appearance of acne before the menses. Patient will be of sad, depressive nature with negative thoughts; upset stomach and will not be able to tolerate even slightest of cold.
- ❖ ***Calcarea Carb***- This remedy is helpful in treating all the types of acne. This is suggested for the patients who have shy nature, are usually weak both physically, mentally, and fatigued. But they will have obese appearance and excessive sweaty body. They suffer from anxiety for all the time and have feeling of facing failure. They have a tendency to thinking about small things and are always in state of confusion.
- ❖ ***Sulphur***:-*Sulphur* is the best natural *Homeopathic* remedy for acne on the patient's back. Patient feels itching at night due to the heating effect of bed. It can be used to treat the worse condition of acne and in the patients with sensitive and

unhealthy skin. *Hepar Sulphur* can be used to treat ulcerating, small, bleeding, pus rich acne which is painful. This are used to treat acne in adults who have sensitive skin and painful acne on forehead.

## CONCLUSION

*Homeopathic* treatment for acne is different from other conventional treatment. Every person is different thus *Homeopathy* works on individualized basis of treatment. Treatment is done based on a patient's unique set of symptoms. Treatment options should be selected by taking into consideration the patient's preferences, body's response to medicines, psychosocial factors etc. Therefore *Homeopathic* treatment can get the great success in treating acne without causing any side effects. Acne results in low self esteem and low confidence which hampers the person's growth. These small lesions become a part of vicious cycle resulting in stress and frustration. Various remedies are present in *Homeopathy* to treat acne which varies according to the severity and the patient. Nature of patient, mental status, type of skin, sensitivity issues plays very important role in deciding the medicine for the patient.

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