

Therapeutic Massage: Role in Homoeopathic Treatment – A Review

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Abstract

Homoeopathy is a therapeutic system follows Similia similibus curentur i.e. like is cured by likes. Here substances are used as curative agents which are applied by above mentioned principle. Massage is used in homoeopathy as an accessory method in convalescent stage after a long chronic sufferer cured from his disease. Massage brings a speedy recovery of lost flesh, weakness of digestion & loss of sleep, in subjects who are already cured by homoeopathic medication.

Key words: *Organon of Medicine, Therapeutic massage, Chronic disease, Homoeopathic massage, Mesmerism*

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Introduction

The word ‘Massage’ comes from the Arabic word ‘mass’ means ‘to press’. Massage is the scientific manipulation of soft tissues of body with hands in order to produce effect on nervous, muscular & circulatory systems which will help to restore or improve function. It is used to create energy & is a natural method of restoring part either locally or generally injured, to its normal condition. Massage demands the skilled use of hands & brain that comes with practice.

Effects of Massage

Mechanical Effects

- Removes dead cells.
- Allows sweat glands, hair follicles & sebaceous glands to be free of obstruction & function better.

- Increases lubricant effect.
- Increases warmth.
- Used in the treatment of scar tissues & adhesions.
- Promote & retain mobility of new skin tissues.
- Over lungs – frees adherent mucus from bronchial tree.
- Encourage hyperaemia (due to histamine release) – increases suppleness of tissues & parasympathetic activity, relaxes muscle tone, reduces edema.

Physiological Effects

- Circulatory System
 - Change in skin color – due to increased circulatory flow, blood velocity & blood viscosity.

- Effect on BP, HR, skin temperature & conductivity & oxygen consumption.
- Increased release of histamine from mast cells & basophils & platelets from blood – initiates triple response
 1. Dilation of minute blood vessels
 2. Flush (flare of redness) around area
 3. Slight swelling
- Nervous System
 - Spinal motor neuron excitability of spinal reflex pathways is reduced due to decreased Hoffman reflex.
 - Inhibitory influence on α motor neuron excitability but no carryover effect.
 - Releases endorphin – reduces chronic pain
- Musculo-Skeletal System
 - Affects muscle fatigue.
 - Affects degree of muscle tone

Psychological Effects

- Positive effects on psychological well being
- Increase feeling of relaxation & rest
- Decreases anxiety level & stress hormone level
- Increased levels of immunoglobulin A – improves immune system
- Helps in reducing depression & adjustment disorders
- Improves pain outcomes, mental energy.
- Improves sleep outcomes

Contraindications

Absolute contraindications

- Tissue inflammation / malignancy
- Circulatory disorders (bleeding tendency)
- Abnormal sensations
- Skin disorders
- Early bruising
- Recent, unhealed scars or open wounds
- Adjacent to recent fracture site
- Acute inflammation / tubercular infection of joint & tissue

- H/O or suspected DVT
- Burns
- Advanced osteoporosis

Relative contraindications

- Older people
- Those with fragile skin
- Early stage of osteoporosis
- Children
- Adults with learning &/or physical disabilities
- People recovering from infections & bone

Treatment Planning

Examination of patient: Assessment of Subjective & Objective History, onset, behaviour, nature, intensity, aggravating & relieving factors, clinical features, Posture, Range of movement, activity level, muscle power, balance, coordination, gait, muscle problem

Determine indications

- Decision to apply massage & to select techniques – based on examination.
- Observation & palpation
- Determine nature of tissue glide (e.g. Loss of elasticity – kneading, picking up; stiffness – skin rolling)

Outcome measures: HR, BP, RR, EMG, mood & anxiety measures, pain, vital capacities, joint range of motion, spasm, swelling, oedema, proprioception.

Palpation & Skills

- Palpation should be repeatable, reliable & valid.
- Attention to patients & physiotherapist position, ensuring hands are accurate, sensitive & testing what is claimed.
- Decide accurately when to apply massage & when not to apply.

Preparation for massage: To be Checked before starting massage that:

- All the body parts can be reached
- Change position without hesitation if needed

Self-preparation

- Attention to personal appearance, hygiene & manicure is essential
- Wear protective clothing (easy laundry, freedom of movement)
- Restrain long hair, jewellery
- Well care of hands
- Cleanliness (avoid infection) – hand wash before & after treatment
- Use warm hands
- Maintain range of motion of forearm & arm which stretches (abduction/extension of thumb, flexion/extension of wrist, pronation/supination)

Hand Exercises: Stretching of fingers, Abduction of fingers, Prayer pose, Reverse prayer pose

Relaxation of hands – Important to keep in full contact with patient & mould to the shape of the body.

- Natural rest position – thumb & fingers slightly flexed & a little apart
- Relax whole arm – needed for some manipulations
- Practice relaxation prior to massage – good method is reciprocal relaxation Co-ordinated & integrated movements of body without fatigue & physical stress are important.

Environment

- Quiet, well heated, well-ventilated room
- Couch / chair – padded, adjustable, washable covers
- Towels (to cover untreated part), pillows, disposable paper sheets

Contact medium

- For easy glide – to reduce friction Powder (talcum powder/ corn starch), Pure lanoline, Liquid oils (vegetable oils, liquid paraffin), Creams, Water based lubricants, Soap & water can be used.
- Allergic reactions - Some contact medium might cause mild to severe allergy, so it essential to check allergic response before use

Preparation of Patient

- Undress (part to be treated) – free of jewellery
 - Upper Limb (neck to fingers)
 - Lower Limb (groin to toe)
 - Back (head to buttock)
 - Neck (head to T12)
 - Face (hairline to just below clavicle)
- Keep patient warm
- Position pillows

Examination of part

- Skin state (dry/ oily/ wet/ hairy) (bruises/ abrasions/ lacerations) to be looked at.
- The feel of the part

Caution in ticklish subjects

- Always put hands in very firm contact & never lift hands off by tickling
- No one hand component (especially fingers)
- Light works tickle, so perform manipulations at maximum depth as tolerated.

Massage in Homoeopathy

In homoeopathy massage is an auxiliary therapeutic procedure which is used in convalescence stage after recovery from chronic disease. As per Hahnemann it should be given by good-natured vigorous person & massage is to be applied on chronic invalids, who, though cured, still suffers from loss of flesh, weakness of

digestion and lack of sleep due to slow convalescence. As we have discussed above Hahnemann given the same caution as it is not to be applied on hypersensitive patients. Hahnemann also stated that mesmeric influence (animal magnetic influence by which a vigorous person infuses his energy into a debilitated patient) of the procedure is the chief feature which helps in recovery of the patients.

There is another procedure mentioned by Hahnemann in 5th edition of Organon of medicine as “Rubbing-in” method where medicinal preparation is rubbed in patients’ sensitive part of skin, thus the medicinal power is communicating to the whole organism. But he also mentioned, in Homoeopathy, we hardly ever require for its cures the rubbing-in of any medication.

Conclusion

In Homoeopathy massage is an important therapeutic method which helps in speedy

recovery after the patient cured by homoeopathic medicine.

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