Endometriotic cyst and fibrocystic disease of the breast treated with individualised homoeopathy – A case report

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Abstract

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Keywords: Case report, Conium mac, Endometriotic cyst, Fibrocystic breast, Silicea

Introduction

Endometriosis is an estrogen-dependent chronic inflammatory condition of women seen in the reproductive period, identified by the presence of endometrial glandular epithelium and stroma outside the uterine cavity.[1] The risk of endometriosis seems to increase in women aged 25–35 years.[2] It affects 20% of infertile women and 15% of women with chronic pelvic pain.[3] Ultrasonography is a readily available, user-dependent and inexpensive tool for the diagnosis of endometriotic lesions.[4] Management depends on location, size and extent of the lesion, age of the patient, desire for fertility and results of previous therapy. Conventional therapy comprises medical, surgical and a combination of both depending on the severity and response of medical treatment.[5] Symptoms of endometriosis are alleviated in the conventional medicine system by hormonal medications and gonadotropin-releasing hormone agonists or antagonists, whereas surgical treatment mostly amounts to laparoscopy, be it diagnostic or therapeutic. Ovarian reserve, follicular density and fecundity rate may be affected by surgical excision of the cyst. Moreover, various research works suggest that the efficacy of the surgical intervention is controversial.[6] For endometriomas, more than 4 cm size laparoscopic cystectomy is recommended. Recurrence of the cyst is possible following invasive surgery. A few published articles report the effectiveness of homoeopathic medicines in the treatment of endometriotic cyst.[7-9]

Fibrocystic disease of the breast commonly affects women between 20 and 50 years of age. Mostly, it presents as dense, irregular and lumpy painful lesions. It may be bilateral and multifocal. Several studies suggest that 30–60% of women in the reproductive age groups suffer from this fibrocystic disease.[10] Malignant changes were found to be unlikely in

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women with non-proliferative lesions. However, there is a fivefold increase in risk to develop breast cancer in women with proliferative lesions with atypical ductal or lobular hyperplasia.\(^1\)\(^1\) An ultrasound is the non-invasive, most convenient and commonly used technique for the diagnosis of breast lesions of various categories and to rule out malignancy. The conventional line of management is carried out mainly for alleviating the pain by pain-killers or by removing fluid through fine needle aspiration. Invasive surgical removal is recommended if there is a constant recurrence of pain.\(^1\)\(^2\)

A prospective study by Farland et al. put forward a correlation between endometriosis and benign breast disease (BBD). In women with endometriosis, there is an increased risk of BBD.\(^1\)\(^3\) We report below a case of left ovarian endometriotic cyst of 7 years duration with comorbid cystic disease of the right breast of recent origin. She had a history of a similar lesion in the right ovary, which had been removed surgically along with the ovary. After that, cystic lesions reappeared in the left ovary, conveying that recurrence occurred even after surgical excision. The left ovarian cyst thoroughly resolved along with the reduction in the cystic changes of the right breast to a substantial amount by homeopathic intervention.

The case has been reported according to the criteria set out in the HOM-CASE guidelines.\(^1\)\(^4\) The Modified Naranjo Criteria were used to assess whether the clinical improvements observed could be attributed to the prescribed homeopathic medicine. Assessment of pain was done using a visual analogue scale, which is a patient-oriented scale.\(^1\)\(^5\) This was a 10-point scale marked as 0–10 where zero indicated ‘no pain’ and 10 indicated ‘worst possible pain’.

**Patient Information**

A 38-year-old female patient presented to the outpatient department of National Homoeopathy Research Institute in Mental Health, Kottayam, in December 2019 with complaints of severe lower abdominal pain at the beginning of menstruation for more than 7 years. Pain in the lower abdomen persisted for 6–8 h and was relieved by lying on the abdomen or by applying pressure. Her menstrual cycle was regular, without any clots and bleeding lasted for 4–5 days. She was diagnosed with endometriotic cysts of the left ovary. As per ultrasonography of the abdomen and pelvis in July 2019, there was a small cyst with internal echoes in the left ovary measured 3.6 × 3.1 × 3.4 cm and 1.8 × 1.6 × 1.5 cm. She also had a complaint of heaviness and tenderness in the right breast for 2 weeks duration and the stitching type of pain which was worse on the slightest movement of the chest, especially breathing. Pain in the breast increased during menses.

The complaint had started almost 1 year after her first delivery, as a sensation of a lump in the right pelvic region at the age of 27 and was diagnosed as the right endometriotic cyst measuring 17 × 8 × 9 cm. Considering the massive size, emergency surgical intervention was suggested and right ovarian cystectomy was done in November 2008. USG dated September 2009 showed recurrence of the cysts measuring 10.68 × 7.9 and 8.22 × 2.91 cm. At the age of 28, she was advised for surgical removal of the right ovary along with the cyst. A few months after the oophorectomy, pain in the lower abdomen during menstruation reappeared. Subsequent USG in January 2011 showed recurrent lymphatic cyst and also a large retention cyst. She took analgesics for relieving the pain during the menses. Gradually, the severity of pain increased and a further USG dated February 2012 reported an endometriotic cyst in the left ovary. Since the patient was in her early 30s and she wanted a second child, the surgical removal of the left ovary was not recommended by gynaecologists. However, despite long years of treatment by infertility specialists and gynaecologists, her strive for conceiving a child was not fulfilled. Her cancer antigen 125 and her husband’s semen analysis reports were within normal range. The patient was worried that she could be infertile due to the pathology of endometriosis. She tried other alternative treatments, but there was no significant improvement in her suffering. She continued to take analgesics for the past 7 years during menstruation.

The patient had chickenpox at the age of 34. She had frequent eructation with chest pain during pregnancy. In ultrasonography dated February 2012, the cyst in the ovary was 2.8 × 3.5 cm and it was gradually increasing in size.

Her paternal grandmother had a history of unknown carcinoma. Mother was dyslipidaemic. The patient was anxious about her complaints as she desired to conceive another child naturally, but was not able to for the past 5 years of treatment. She lost all her hope and was in despair. Her appetite and generals were insignificant. She had more sweat on her back. She had a desire for chicken, fish, tea and spicy things. She preferred warm food and found it difficult to tolerate heat. Her other complaints were: Falling of hair for many years after oophorectomy and hair-growth on the chin. She had a sensation of distended abdomen after eating which was relieved by loud eructation, occasionally associated with stitching pain in the chest.

**General Physical Examination**

The patient had a moderate built and her height was 153 cm and weight 55 kg. No pallor, cyanosis, icterus, clubbing, oedema or lymphadenopathy were observed. She was afebrile; her pulse rate was 72 beats/min with a respiratory rate of 16/min. Her BP was 130/70 mmHg.

**Analysis of the Case**

The patient was prescribed individualised medicine after repertorisation using RADAR OPUS 22.16 software [Figure 1]. As per the repertorial result, the first prescription was done on 5 December 2019. *Silicea* (*Sil 6c*) was prescribed once a day for a week, followed by placebo for a month. After a month follow-up, the patient complained of severe low back pain; so, the same medicine was repeated in raised potency that is, *S*0C. In the fourth follow-up, patient complaints of severe low back pain and lower abdominal pain persisted even though
there was a relief for pain in the breast. Subsequently, the case was reanalysed and considering the miasmatic totality, she was given Conium maculatum (Con) in 30 potency which yielded good results. Case follow-up details are given in Table 1.

**Discussion**

This case report shows improvement of symptoms and pathology of endometriomas with individualised and miasmatic remedies, selected, on the basis of totality. The patient had severe dysmenorrhea for more than 7 years and was prescribed Sil on 5 Dec 2019. In her follow-up visit in March 2020, her abdominal complaints worsened and breast complaints improved a little.

An in-depth understanding of the dominant miasm of the patient through the totality of symptoms, individualisation, personal history and family and past histories can give insight into the morbid susceptibility and bring out the cure. In this case, the miasmatic analysis was based on the dominant symptoms of the sycotic miasm such as pathological symptoms (Endometriotic cyst, fibrocystic disease of the right breast, tumours cystic, glands, painful menses, stitching pain abdomen during menses and mental symptoms despair). Her paternal grandmother also had a history of unknown carcinoma, her mother was dyslipidaemic.

In the menstruation chapter of ‘Boenninghausens characteristics and repertory by Cyrus Maxwell Boger’ conium is presented under the rubrics: ‘Concomitants during menses; Mammae’ as the highest grade (four marks) remedy and ‘Concomitants during menses; Ovaries’ as one mark remedy. Therefore, conium 30 was prescribed as an antisyctotic drug and repeated weekly for a month to complete the treatment process.

Gradually, her lower abdominal pain also improved; the patient was able to discontinue the use of analgesics for severe dysmenorrhea. The patient felt delighted about the improvement of her years of suffering. Her USG in January 2021 was normal. The endometriotic cyst resolved with the general well-being of the patient after homoeopathic treatment. The fibrocystic disease of the right breast had also reduced. Pain in the chest and loud eructation or gastric disturbances also improved.

In the patient’s score based on the Modified Naranjo Criteria, zero scores for Criteria 3, 6a, 6b, 7, and 10. Detailing of these scores for Criteria 1 and 2 (Her main complaint was severe lower abdomen pain and backache during menses, which became painless within a plausible period with homoeopathic treatment), 4 and 5 (there was general well-being, along with improvement in loud eructation, distension of abdomen and heaviness of breast), 8 (no other treatment was taken) and 9 (improvement was documented by before and after treatment USG report) as well as the improbability of spontaneous remission with this disorder suggest that the clinical improvement seen could be attributed to the homoeopathic medicine. No initial aggravation was observed (criteria 3=0), the direction of cure (criteria 6b=0) was not established and no old unresolved symptoms reappeared (criteria 7=0) and there is doubt in repeat dosing if conducted, will create similar clinical improvement (criteria 10=0). This allows us to conclude, based on the Modified Naranjo Criteria scores, that there is a causal attribution to disease improvement. Thus, suggesting a definite association between the medicine and the outcome [Table 2].

Parveen et al. presented a case of successful homoeopathic treatment of primary infertility in a female who was long treated for endometriosis. This case report is similar to that case, which was treated with constitutional homoeopathic medicine Sil with increasing potencies. Further, through miasmatic analysis, Syphilinum was prescribed as an intercurrent remedy. However, there is lack of information of associated fibroadenoma breast after intervention in this study.

Salodiya et al. treated ovarian endometrioma with LM potency of Apis mellifica. The authors highlighted the usefulness of individualised homoeopathic medicines as well as the importance of repertory and repertorisation in pathological cases.
Table 1: Prescription with follow-up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
<th>Outcome of the assessment</th>
<th>Medicine prescribed with potency and doses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 December 2019</td>
<td>LMP – 3 December 2019. Baseline symptoms. VAS-8</td>
<td>USG Abdomen and pelvis on July 2019 – small cyst with internal echoes in the left ovary measured 3.6×3.1×3.4 cm and 1.8×1.6×1.5 cm. Mammo graphy breast on November 2019 – Fibrocystic disease of the Right Breast BIRADS FAC II with multiple cystic lesion measured – 2.5×2.7 cm in 8 O’clock position, 0.8×0.9 cm in 6 O’clock position, 0.6×0.7 cm in 5 O’clock position, 0.6×0.8 cm in 2 O’clock position, 1×0.9 cm in 10 O’clock position.</td>
<td>Silicea 6C*/OD***×1 week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 June 2020</td>
<td>LMP – 12 June 2020. No pain during menses (VAS-0). No tenderness and heaviness in the breast. Loud eructation with distended feeling in the abdomen slightly reduced.</td>
<td>USG on June 2020 – Cyst with dense internal echoes of size 1.9×1.6 cm and 1.8×1.3 cm, Left ovary appears adhered to the uterus, Right mild hydropalpinx, Mildly bulky uterus with heterogeneous echo texture. USG of Right Breast – Small anechoic focal lesion in 8–9 O’clock position and tiny hypoechoic focal lesions in the inferolateral quadrant.</td>
<td>Conium 30 4D, 1D/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 July 2020</td>
<td>LMP – 5 July 2020. No pain during menses (VAS-0), Slight tenderness on the right breast. Loud eructation with distended feeling in the abdomen reduced.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conium 30 4D, 1D/week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 December 2020</td>
<td>LMP – 19 November 2020. No pain during menses (VAS-0). No tenderness and heaviness in the breast. Loud eructation with distended feeling in the abdomen slightly present. Numbness of palm present.</td>
<td>USG Right Breast/Axilla – Simple cysts with no septations in the right breast as 1.6×1.2 cm and 0.5×0.5 cm in 6 O’clock position and 0.6×0.6 cm in 8 O’clock position.</td>
<td>Conium 30/4D, 1D/Week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*C: Centesimal,**OD: Everyday,***D: Dose, PMP: Previous Menstrual Period, LMP: Last Menstrual Period, VAS: Visual Analog Scale
This case report indicates that homoeopathy is useful in the management of endometriotic cystic disease, where conventional medicine showed only temporary relief to the patient. No adverse effects were observed throughout the course of homoeopathic treatment. Although the study of a single case does not constitute strong evidence, the outcome is encouraging. We propose a study to be taken up on a larger population to validate the results of homoeopathy in such comorbid clinical conditions to generalise the outcome of this case study to a wider population.

**Conclusion**

This evidence-based case report suggests that individualised homoeopathic medicines can be used as a useful, safe and non-invasive mode of treatment for ovarian endometriotic cyst associated with fibrocystic disease of the breast.

**Patient perception**

‘I am happy that my severe abdominal pain during menses is absent and that I can discontinue the use of analgesics. There is heaviness feeling in the breast and no gastric complaints like loud eructations and distension of the abdomen. I also have a feeling of well-being which I think is because homoeopathic medicines are not typically hormonal treatments. I am happy to see such improvement in my years of suffering’.

**Authors contributions**

Dr. Bhuvaneswari Rajachandrasekar: Concepts, definition of intellectual content, literature search, data acquisition, data analysis, manuscript preparation, manuscript editing and manuscript review, Guarantor. Dr. Reshma Radhakrishnan: Literature search, data acquisition, data analysis, and manuscript preparation.

**Declaration of patient consent**

The authors certify that they have obtained patient consent for anonymously reporting her clinical information and investigation reports in the journal.

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Nil.

**Conflicts of interest**

None declared.

**References**

**Title:** Endometriotic Zyste and fibrozystische Erkrankung der Brust, behandelt mit individualisierter Homöopathie – Ein Fallbericht

**Résumé du cas:** L'endométriose est l'un des troubles gynécologiques bénins des femmes en âge de procréer, caractérisé par la présence de tissu endométrial fonctionnel en dehors de la muqueuse utérine. La maladie fibro-kystique du sein est une lésion bénigne la plus fréquente chez les femmes en âge de procréer qui consultent un médecin pour des problèmes mammaires au cours de leur vie. Elle se caractérise par une hyperprolifération du tissu conjonctif ou fibrose, qui est suivie d'une prolifération épithéliale facultative dans les tissus mammaires. **Résumé du cas**: Nous rapportons le cas d'un kyste ovarien endométriosique gauche avec de multiples lésions kystiques dans le sein droit chez une patiente de 36 ans, traitée avec succès par une médecine homéopathique individualisée. Elle souffrait de douleurs cycliques sévères dans le bas-ventre depuis plus de sept ans, et les algésiques conventionnels et même les procédures chirurgicales n'ont pas permis de la soulager. Le traitement homéopathique a commencé par Silicea sur la base de la totalité des symptômes et de la répertorisation, puis est passé à Conium maculatum comme remède anti-miasmatic, ce qui a permis de constater la disparition du kyste endométriosique gauche et la réduction de la taille de la lésion kystique du sein droit avec une amélioration générale. Les critères modifiés de Naranjo ont été utilisés pour évaluer l'attribution causale au médicament prescrit dans ce cas. L'évaluation de la douleur a été faite à l'aide d'une échelle visuelle analogique (EVA). Ce cas fondé sur des données probantes, rapporté selon les directives HOM-CASE, suggère que les médicaments homéopathiques individualisés peuvent être utilisés comme un mode de traitement utile, sûr et non invasif pour le kyste endométriosique ovarien, ainsi qu'à la maladie fibrokystique du sein.

Título: Quiste endometriótico y enfermedad fibroquística de la mama tratada con Homeopatía individualizada: Un caso práctico

Resumen: Introducción: La endometriosis es uno de los trastornos ginecológicos benignos en mujeres en edad fértil, caracterizado por la presencia de tejido endometrial funcional fuera de la mucosa uterina. La enfermedad fibroquística de la mama es la lesión más común y benigna entre las mujeres en edad reproductiva que buscan asesoramiento médico para los problemas de la mama durante toda la vida. Se caracteriza por la hiperproliferación del tejido conjuntivo o fibrosis, seguida por la proliferación epitelial facultativa en los tejidos mamarios. Resumen del caso: Se informa de un caso de quiste ovárico endometriótico izquierdo con múltiples lesiones quísticas en la mama derecha en un paciente de 36 años de edad tratado con éxito con medicina homeopática individualizada. Ella tuvo dolor abdominal inferior cíclico severo por más de siete años, y los analgésicos convencionales e incluso los procedimientos quirúrgicos no podían permitirse el alivio. El tratamiento homeopático se inició con Silicea en base a la totalidad de los síntomas y la repertorización y posteriormente se cambió a Conium maculatum como remedio anti miasmático, que mostró desaparición del quiste endometrióscio izquierdo y reducción del tamaño de la lesión quística en la mama derecha con mejoría general. Los Criterios de Naranjo Modificados se utilizaron para evaluar la atribución causal al medicamento prescrito en este caso. La evaluación del dolor se realizó mediante una escala visual analógica (VAS). Este caso basado en la evidencia reportado de acuerdo con las guías DEL CASO de HOM, sugirió que los medicamentos homeopáticos individualizados pueden ser usados como un modo útil, seguro y no invasivo de tratamiento para el quiste endometriótico ovárico, asociado con enfermedad fibroquística de la mama.