Lentigo treated by Sepia officinalis – A case report

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How to cite this article  
Sadhukhan M, Kundu C, Das S. Lentigo treated by Sepia officinalis – A case report. Indian J Res Homoeopathy 2022;16(2). doi: 10.53945/2320-7094.1052

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Abstract
Introduction: Lentigo is a benign pigmented macular lesion on the skin with a clearly defined margin. It can affect both genders, all ages and races. Solar lentigines are especially prevalent in fair-skinned adults. Sunburn may be one of the causes of lentigo. Modern medicine treats these conditions by either melanin-specific high-energy lasers or external applications. Case Summary: A 56-year-old female visited outpatient department with a complaint of lentigo on the right cheek for the past 15 years. The patient was treated with Sepia officinalis in increasing potencies (200, 1M and 10M). The treatment got completed over 9 months with significant improvement and complete disappearance of lentigo. The cases were documented with proper photographs at onset and during treatment. It can be suggested from this case study that high dilutions of homoeopathic medicines are useful for patients with lentigo.

Acknowledgments and Source of Funding
The authors are grateful to Dr. Chanchal Kumar Bhar, MBBS, DVD, PGDM, Ph.D. (Dermatology), consultant dermatologist of Dr. Anjali Chatterjee Regional Research Institute (H) for diagnosis of the case.

This case report is available in Indian Journal of Research in Homoeopathy: [https://www.ijrh.org/journal/vol16/iss2/6](https://www.ijrh.org/journal/vol16/iss2/6)
Lentigo treated by *Sepia officinalis* – A case report

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Abstract

*Introduction:* Lentigo is a benign pigmented macular lesion on the skin with a clearly defined margin. It can affect both genders, all ages and races. Solar lentigines are especially prevalent in fair-skinned adults. Sunburn may be one of the causes of lentigo. Modern medicine treats these conditions by either melanin-specific high-energy lasers or external applications. **Case Summary:** A 56-year-old female visited outpatient department with a complaint of lentigo on the right cheek for the past 15 years. The patient was treated with *Sepia officinalis* in increasing potencies (200, 1M and 10M). The treatment got completed over 9 months with significant improvement and complete disappearance of lentigo. The cases were documented with proper photographs at onset and during treatment. It can be suggested from this case study that high dilutions of homoeopathic medicines are useful for patients with lentigo.

**Keywords:** Cuttlefish, High dilution, Homoeopathic medicine, Lentigo

**INTRODUCTION**

Lentigo is small, sharply, circumscribed, macular, pigmented and mucocutaneous lesions which measure 1–5 mm, but not larger than 1 cm, surrounded by normal skin. Histologically, hyperplasia of the epidermis may be observed as well as increased pigmentation of the basal layer and a variable number of melanocytes.[1] “Black solar lentigo” is a melanotic macula, that may evolve slowly over several years or they may be eruptive, appearing rather suddenly,[2,3] commonly found in fair-skinned individuals on sun-exposed areas of the body. Clinically, the term “ink spot Lentigo” is used and it is a dark pigmented spot[4] and the colour ranges from brown to brown and black to black and the pigmentation may be homogeneous or variegated.

However, the case reported here is typically an ink spot lentigo which is a unique type that appears among several other common solar lentigines.[5] Post-inflammatory hyperpigmentation, solar lentigos and melasma come under the category of hyperpigmentation and occur widely in the human population and are thus of broad interest for control. Pigmentation of the skin is primarily related to melanocyte functionality, but the surrounding keratinocytes and extracellular matrix proteins and fibroblasts in the underlying dermal compartment also actively contribute to cutaneous homeostasis.[6] There are potentially hundreds of proteins and other effectors involved in pigmentation based on a genomic and proteomic understanding of the melanocyte and melanogenesis.[7]

Homoeopathic medicines are prepared from different drug substances, one of which is *Sep. off.* It is prepared from the ink of Cuttlefish which has been proved to play various primary roles in the world of alternative medicine and has the widest range of therapeutic applications.[8] The ink of cuttlefish has a variant action like squid ink; both are dark in colour, released into the water by most species of cephalopod.[9] It has been found that there is a potential antibacterial activity of the squid ink against biofilm bacteria.[10] Recent studies have also revealed that *Sepia officinalis* has antioxidant and preservative values.[11] Homoeopathic case reports have shown positive results in the disappearance of similar skin eruptions like Melasma.[12]

Access this article online

Quick Response Code:

Website: www.ijrh.org

DOI: 10.53945/2320-7094.1052

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Received: 27 August 2021; Accepted: 10 June 2022

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How to cite this article: Sadhukhan M, Kundu C, Das S. Lentigo treated by *Sepia officinalis* – A case report. Indian J Res Homoeopathy 2022;16(2):119-124.
**Patient Information**

A 56-year-old female housewife from a middle-class Bengali family attended the outpatient department (OPD) of Dr. Anjali Chatterji Regional Research Institute for Homoeopathy, Kolkata (H), on 14 November, 2018 with the complaint of a black round spot on her right cheek since 15 years without pain or itching, which was very small at the beginning but increased rapidly in the past 4 months.

Besides this, she also complained of eructations sometimes due to excessive flatulence, but she could not mention any specific modalities. She used to experience mild pain in both knee joints with aggravation in the morning and with the first motion and amelioration from continued motion.

She had a history of cholecystectomy one year ago. On further enquiry, she conveyed that her father died of some cardiovascular disease and her mother had a cerebrovascular accident resulting in paralysis.

She had two children and had had two spontaneous, and one induced abortion in the past.

She had an intense desire for sour food. She also had desire for salty food, fish and eggs. She had a dry and slightly coated tongue. Her bowel movements were normal. She attained menopause at 50 years of age. She was ambithermal.

The patient was shy, less talkative and timid and became anxious easily. She usually remained sad and depressed and always thought about her health.

**Physical examinations and diagnosis**

Dermatological examination showed a single, brownish lesion on the right cheek. The lesion was slightly raised from the surface.

The case was diagnosed as a case of lentigo [Figure 1] by the dermatologist. Haematological, biochemistry and urine investigations were found to be within normal ranges.

**Analysis of the case and repertorisation**

After analysis and evaluation of the symptoms, the totality of symptoms was constructed and the case was repertorised with the help of ‘Hompath Classic M.D Version-10 Software’ using Kent’s repertory. The repertorial results are shown in Figure 2. The following symptoms were considered for repertorisation:

- Shy, less talkative and timid
- Desire, sour things
- Menopausal age
- Brown round spot on the right cheek
- Pain in both knee joints
- Dry tongue, slightly coated
- Flatulence

**Therapeutic intervention with followups and outcome**

Based on totality, individualization, miasmatic evaluation, repertorial analysis and consultation with materia medica, *Sepia officinalis* (*Sep. off.*) was selected as the similimum. On the first visit (14th November, 2018), a single dose of *Sep. off.* 200 was prescribed in water. Clinical follow-up of the patient was done fortnightly or as per requirement for the next 9 months. During the follow-ups, changes in potency and repetitions of doses were done, as per guidelines of the homoeopathic philosophy.

The medicine administered in increasing potencies (200 C, 1M and 10M) improved the skin symptoms. The other associated symptoms of fullness and tightness of the abdomen also improved during the treatment. The colour of the lentigo started fading (especially after *Sepia* 1M and 10M). In between, *Urtica urens* Q and *Calcarea phosphorica* (*Cal. phos.*) 6X were prescribed to ameliorate excessive knee pain. The detailed follow-up is given in Table 1.

**Outcome assessment**

The case was documented photographically at onset and during treatment [Figures 1 and 3-8].

**Results**

The patient improved slowly, but the marked change was evident in subsequent follow-ups [Table 1], without any other complications of the patient.

**Discussion**

Lentigo is a distinctive entity in skin disease and must be considered a benign lesion.[14]

According to the modern system of medicine, treatment is usually unnecessary, but some extremely ugly lesions can be treated by melanin-specific high-energy lasers or external application of 0.1% tretinoin cream or 3% hydroquinone.[15] The treatments of pigmented lesions like solar lentigines with intense pulsed light systems are often limited by pain and post-treatment erythema and oedema, though they tried to minimize these complications using different methods like pneumatic skin flattening technology.[16]
The case reported here is treated by an oral homoeopathic medicine, without any external application, which is completely different from the approach of the conventional system of medicine. In the present case, apart from potentized Sepia, one mother tincture and biochemic medicine were given for some acute rheumatic problems. However, the alleviation of the dark hyperpigmented spot (lentigo) started disappearing after prescription of Sepia. It is very clear from the case history that without any sort of topical application or any invasive therapy, the lesion disappeared and the skin returned to its natural colour. The natural skin colour of the affected part was restored at the last follow-up. The patient did not report after that for a long period of almost 1½ years. Thereafter, she reported that there was no recurrence of the skin lesion.

Although no case of such hyperpigmented spot has been found to be reported in homoeopathy, the literature mentions that many medicines, including Sepia, have an action on the pigmentation problems of the skin.\textsuperscript{[17-21]}

### Table 1: Follow up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Follow-up date</th>
<th>Medicine with doses</th>
<th>Justification of prescription</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 November, 2018</td>
<td>Sep. off. 200 single dose in distilled water</td>
<td>Baseline presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 November, 2018</td>
<td>Placebo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 December, 2018</td>
<td>Sep. off. 1M single dose in distilled water</td>
<td>The dryness of the spot decreased, but the size remains the same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 December, 2018</td>
<td>Placebo</td>
<td>Brownish spot almost same</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04 December, 2019</td>
<td>Placebo</td>
<td>The spot became lighter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>06 March, 2019</td>
<td>Sep. off. 10M single dose in distilled water</td>
<td>Spot much reduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 March, 2019</td>
<td>Placebo</td>
<td>Brownish spot little better became status quo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01 April, 19</td>
<td>Urtica urens Q prescribed 5 drops twice daily for 20 days</td>
<td>Spot decreasing in size. Serum uric acid elevated and slight pain in the right knee joint started.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 April, 2019</td>
<td>Sep. off. 10M single dose in distilled water, followed by Cal. Phos. 6X prescribed 4 tablets every day for 1 month</td>
<td>Pain in right knee severely aggravated from 2 days. Urtica urens Q was given to give temporary relief to the knee pain as her serum uric acid level was elevated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 June, 2019</td>
<td>Placebo</td>
<td>The brownish spot on the cheek remain the same, the white spot around the black spot on the cheek increasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 August, 2019</td>
<td>Sep. off. 10M single dose in distilled water, followed by Cal. Phos. 6X prescribed 4 tablets every day for 1 month</td>
<td>The pain in the leg increased. No change of pain by taking Urtica urens Q therefore discontinued</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Figure 2: Repertorisation
**Conclusion**

Homoeopathic medicine Sepia off. was found useful in treating lentigo. More such documented cases and scientific trials could throw more light on this front.

**Declaration of patient consent**

The authors certify that they have obtained all appropriate patient consent for using her images and other clinical information reporting in the journal. The patient understands that her name
and initials will not be published and due efforts will be made
to conceal the identity, but anonymity cannot be guaranteed.

Financial support and sponsorship
Nil.

Conflicts of interest
None declared.

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**Sadhukhan, et al.: Lentigo treated by homoeopathy**

**Indian Journal of Research in Homoeopathy ¦ Volume 16 ¦ Issue 2 ¦ Apr-Jun 2022**

**Titre: Lentigo traité par Sepia officinalis- Un rapport de cas**

**Résumé : Introduction:** Le lentigo est une lésion maculaire pigmentée bénigne sur la peau avec une marge clairement définie. Il peut affecter les deux sexes, tous les âges et toutes les races. Les lentigos solaires sont particulièrement fréquents chez les adultes à la peau claire. Les coups de soleil peuvent être l'une des causes du lentigo. La médecine moderne traite ces affections par des lasers à haute énergie spécifiques de la mélanine ou par des applications externes. **Case summary:** Une femme de 56 ans s'est rendue à l'hôpital pour se plaindre de lentigo sur la joue droite depuis 15 ans. La patiente a été traitée avec Sepia officinalis en puissances croissantes (200, 1M et 10M). Le traitement a duré neuf mois, avec une amélioration significative et une disparition complète du lentigo. Les cas ont été documentés avec des photographies appropriées au début et pendant le traitement. On peut conclure de cette étude de cas que les hautes dilutions des médicaments homéopathiques sont utiles pour les patients atteints de lentigo.

**Titel: Lentigo behandelt mit Sepia officinalis - ein Fallbericht**


**Título: Lentejas tratadas por Sepia oficinales - un caso de reporte**

**Resumen: Introducción:** La lenteja es una lesión macular pigmentada benigna en la piel con un margen claramente definido. Puede afectar a ambos géneros, a todas las edades y razas. Las lentiginas solares son especialmente prevalentes en adultos de piel clara. Las quemaduras solares pueden ser una de las causas de la lenteja. La medicina moderna trata estas condiciones ya sea mediante láseres de alta energía específicos de melanina o aplicaciones externas. **Resumen del caso:** Una mujer de 56 años visitó el OPD con una queja de Lentito en la mejilla derecha durante los últimos 15 años. El paciente fue tratado con Sepia oficinales en potencias crecientes (200, 1M y 10M). Treatment got completed over nine months with significant improvement and complete disappearance of Lentigo. The cases were documented with proper photographs at onset and during treatment. It can be concluded from this case study that high dilutions of homoeopathic medicines are useful for patients with lentigo.