
A Review on Herbal Naturopathy

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ABSTRACT

Modern medicinal practice is widely followed nowadays which is providing the quick treatment but lacking and even showing hazardous signs in the long run. Naturopathy treats the body by bringing us close to nature. Naturopathy works on the route of suffering and treats it naturally. Human body is made up from five basic elements of nature. So, harmony has to be maintained between natures to live a healthy life. Imbalance of these natural elements will cause diseased states. So, naturopathy is a very effective healing treatment for a quality life. It is both safe and effective treatment and helps to stimulate positive thinking, lowers- stress, anxiety and depression, improves overall health, enhances outlook and improves one's ability to cope with health-related issues.

Keywords: Naturopathy, Anxiety, Balneotherapy, Thalassotherapy.

INTRODUCTION

Naturopathy - "nature cure" meaning treatment of suffering or disease via nature. Naturopathic treatment implies connection with nature, focusing on the body's capacity to heal itself. The World Health Organization (WHO) defined health as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (1). Naturopathy is a system of treating, preventing, curing disease with natural care -- such as fresh air, organic diet, water from natural sources far from any contamination, herbs, soil etc. Body comes in harmony with the constructive principles of nature on physical, mental, moral and spiritual planes of living. Naturopathy has great health promotive, disease preventive and curative as well as restorative potential (2). Naturopathy is a holistic system of healing that incorporates a range of treatments and natural therapies, with the underlying belief that your body is able to fight infection and disease itself, given the right support. Naturopathy believes that if one restores or maintains the equilibrium of the body, our immune system is better placed to defend itself against infection and disease.(3) Naturopathy has turned out to be a very important and beneficial remedy for our physical as well as mental health elevation.

Naturopathic healthcare combines modern treatment methods with traditional methods. It includes alternative, natural therapies to modern medicine. Naturopathy is a distinct type of primary care medicine that blends age-old healing traditions with scientific advances and current research. It is guided by a unique set of principles that recognize the body's innate healing capacity, emphasize disease prevention, and encourage individual responsibility to obtain optimal health.(4) Naturopathic treatment modalities include diet and clinical nutrition, behavioral change, hydrotherapy, homeopathy, botanical medicine, physical medicine, pharmaceuticals, and minor surgery. Naturopathy is an alternative way of body healing i.e self healing via "nature" by focusing on some very basic things such as diet and lifestyle.

Many other approaches such as dietary supplement, herbs, exercise, massage, iridology, acupuncture, hair analysis and homeopathy may also be incorporated (5).

Anxiety - a mental health disorder which includes panic attacks, obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder etc, is a feeling of fear and worry which can very strongly interfere with one's quality of life (6, 7). Naturopathic treatment has proved its effectiveness over psychiatric disorders, anxiety, fatigue, social functioning, vitality, and overall quality of life (8).

HISTORY OF NATUROPATHY

Naturopathy dates back to the beginning of human civilization:

- 1) Ancient Egypt (5000 years)
- 2) India (Ayurveda) (4000 years)
- 3) China (TCM) (4000 years)
- 4) Ancient Greece (3000 years)
- 5) Native Americans (3000 years)

Dr. Benedict Lust is known as the father of modern-day naturopathy, a german doctor who brought natural cures to the United States in the nineteenth century with the concept of 'raise the vitality of the patient to a proper standard of health' (9).

The term naturopathy was coined in 1895 by John Scheel. He was a german doctor who was practicing in the USA. His methods of treatment involve hydrotherapy and hygienics (10).

Natural therapies were always part of our life. Rural people have always embraced holism, but urban lifestyle has brought people far from nature and due to this the self healing power which has been given by nature to the body has greatly declined (11).

Principals and Objectives of Naturopathic System of Medicine

Naturopathy has proved its great health primitive disease preventive and curative as well as restorative potential. The concept of naturopathic medicine is to identify and heal the root cause of an illness-not just stop the symptoms.

Naturopathy focuses on education and prevention, often emphasizing on diet, exercise, and stress management. Naturopathy combines both modern and traditional healthcare methods (12).

Naturopathy uses a series of principles and beliefs to create individual treatment plans:-

- 1) **Self-healing:** Obstacles are identified and removed to recover, allowing for natural healing. (Naturopathy focuses on self healing).
- 2) **Underlying symptoms:** Rather than stopping symptoms, naturopathy tends to resolve underlying physical or mental issues by treating the body, mind, and spirit.
- 3) **Wholesome (safe) treatment:** Naturopathy chooses harmless treatment, the system of treatment is considered safe and wholesome.
- 4) **Food is medicine:** Naturopathy does not use medicines. According to Naturopathy "Food is Medicine".
- 5) **Holistic treatment:** Persons wellness is considered, recognizing individuality to treat all aspects of a person's health effectively.
- 6) **Education in treatment:** Rather just doing treatment naturopathy teaches self-care to help empower people against ill health.

- 7) **Prevention:** Prevention is better than cure; it is good to remove toxic substances from a lifestyle to prevent problems from arising and enhancing lifestyle. (13)

Assessment Techniques and Treatment Modalities in Naturopathy

Naturopathy uses certain techniques for the patient examination such as: -

- 1) **Kinesiology:-** It is the study of the body's movement. The study involves knowledge of human physiology and movement to treat patients' morbidity and improve their lives through exercise. This naturopathic therapy helps the body to heal itself (14).
- 2) **Iridology:-** Iris of both eyes is studied to obtain information about the medical condition of body parts simultaneously. The study of iris may reveal various factors in the body such as- inherited health dispositions, tendency towards health problems, current health condition (15).
- 3) **Blood analysis:-** Blood analysis test may be recommended to identify the underlying cause of health problems. Some other test may also be conducted along with blood test such as Blood, Urinary and Salivary hormone testing by naturopath to check Fatigue, Infertility, Weight Gain, PMS, PCOS, Menopause, Hypothyroidism and Adrenal fatigue in body. (16)
- 4) **Stool and Urine analysis:-** It is analyzed to identify the composition of body waste which affects the person's health and many other factors. (17)
- 5) **Hair analysis:-** Hair analysis is valuable for diagnosing physiological abnormalities. Low zinc is associated with poor wound healing, weight problems, depressed libido, hair loss and impotence. Low magnesium is associated with cardiovascular problems, depression and anxiety. Even the presence of toxic substances can be detected by hair analysis. Excess lead is associated with fatigue, constipation, insomnia, emotional disturbances, hyperactivity and learning disabilities in children. Detection of exposure to elements like arsenic, aluminum, cadmium, mercury etc can be analyzed by hair analysis (18).
- 6) **Functional Testing:** These involve specialized tests that measure how the body's biological and biochemical processes are working as a whole. These tests can measure pathways, enzymes, nutrients, genes, hormones, amino acids, neurotransmitters, gut bacteria and Parasites. (19)

Knowledge about the patient's history plays a very important role in the diagnosis and treatment of naturopathy to know the root cause of the problem. Such as:-

- 1) Past history
- 2) Family history
- 3) Lifestyle history
- 4) Mind/ Emotional/ Spirit history
- 5) Body system (20)

Treatment Used In Naturopathy

- 1) **Diet and Clinical Nutrition:-**“Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food,” *Hippocrates* (21). A balanced diet low in processed foods and rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, fish, and lean meats is made part of a healthy lifestyle (22). Such a diet reduces the risk of developing numerous medical disorders including cardiovascular disease and some cancers (23, 24). It is very clear evidence that diet also affects our mental health, and has proven its efficiency in enhancing and uplifting health (25).

- 2) **Behavioral Change:-** Enhancing mindful approach to living is associated with a step towards decrease in emotional distress, improving quality of life by positively increasing state of mind. These activities not only influence and promote the activity of the brain, but also influence autonomic nervous system, stress hormones, the immune system, health behaviors, including eating, sleeping etc (26).
- 3) **Hydrotherapy:-** It is also called medical hydrology. In this therapy water is used for the upliftment of health in certain ways. Balneotherapy and Thalassotherapy are its branches (27).
 - a) **Balneotherapy:-** This therapy treats diseases by bathing. It is a traditional medicine technique which is widely used in spas (28).
 - b) **Thalassotherapy:-** The therapy does treatment using seawater and seascapes for healing (29).
- 4) **Homeopathy:-** German physician, Samuel Hahnemann created this healing system of treatment over 200 years ago. It is based on the theory 'the similar principle'. The substances are made from plants, minerals or animals, sources which are known to cause symptoms similar to a certain disease, and are given to patients in an extremely diluted form for the treatment (30, 31).
- 5) **Botanical medicine:-** They are also called herbal medicines, is a science and practice of using medicinal plants and extracts to improve quality of life. This is the most popular form of traditional medicine (32). More than 80% of the world population depends on these medicines for primary health care (33).
- 6) **Physical medicine:-** The therapeutic use of physiotherapy, therapeutics exercise, energy work, naturopathic manipulation, hydrotherapy etc - for treatment of choice for soft tissue dysfunction and impingement syndrome (21, 34).
- 7) **Acupuncture:-** It is a traditional healing practice from chinese medicine. Thin needles are placed at specific points in the body. This traditional treatment is primarily used to relieve pain (35, 36). Stimulation of acupoints elicits functional responses that can be used to treat disease (37).
- 8) **Counselling Techniques:-** Emotional problems and stress can interfere with the healing process. Counselling techniques can include stress management strategies and life coaching. Naturopathy teaches selfcare via counselling (38).
- 9) **Aromatherapy:-** This naturopathic therapy uses natural plant extracts for the treatment to promote health. The therapy uses essential oil and not only improves the health of the body but also mind and spirit, and enhances physical and emotional health (39).
- 10) **Mud Therapy:-** Mud absorbs, dissolves and eliminates the toxins and rejuvenates the body. It is employed in treatment of various diseases like constipation, skin diseases etc.
- 11) **Food Therapy:-** Most of the diseases are amenable through food therapy. As you eat so will you be physically fit as well as mentally. Your food is your medicine. These are the main slogans of Nature Cure. (40)

CONCLUSION

Human body is made up from five basic elements of nature. So, people need to learn the importance of being in some connection with nature to maintain a balanced healing process. Nature has an immense power of self healing. The various treatments and therapies used in naturopathy all have the ultimate goal of self healing.

The identification and treatment of the root cause of disease is very important, for a disease free quality life. Unlike allopathic medicine which treats symptoms only, naturopathy

view symptoms as a body's attempt to heal itself and work towards curing the underlying illness and supporting the person as they heal themselves with the use of diet, exercise, herbal remedies and other natural treatments.

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