

## The Role of Homoeopathy In Renal Stone Management

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### ABSTRACT

Renal stones, a common urological disorder, affect millions worldwide, causing significant morbidity and economic burden. Conventional treatments, including surgery and medication, often come with risks and side effects. Homoeopathy, a complementary and alternative medicine system, offers a promising approach to renal stone management. This review aims to critically evaluate the existing literature on the role of homeopathy in renal stone management, exploring its efficacy, safety, and potential mechanisms of action. A comprehensive literature search was conducted using major databases, including PubMed, Scopus, and Cochrane Library. Studies published in English, investigating the use of homeopathic remedies in renal stone management, were included. The search yielded 25 studies, including clinical trials, observational studies, and case reports. The review reveals that several homeopathic remedies, such as *Berberis vulgaris*, *Lycopodium clavatum*, and *Sarsaparilla*, have been traditionally used to treat renal stones. These remedies are thought to act through various mechanisms, including anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and diuretic effects. Clinical trials and observational studies suggest that homeopathic treatment can reduce symptoms, improve quality of life, and even prevent stone recurrence. While the evidence is promising, the review highlights several limitations, including the small sample sizes, variable study quality, and lack of standardization in homeopathic treatment. Furthermore, the exact mechanisms of action of homeopathic remedies in renal stone management remain unclear. In conclusion, this review suggests that Homoeopathy may play a role in renal stone management, offering a safe and effective complementary approach to conventional treatments. However, further research is needed to fully elucidate the efficacy, safety, and mechanisms of action of homeopathic remedies in this context. Standardized, high-quality studies are required to inform clinical practice and policy.

**Keywords:** Homoeopathy, renal stones, urology, complementary and alternative medicine, integrative medicine.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Renal stones, a common and ancient affliction, have plagued humanity for centuries. The earliest recorded reference to renal stones dates back to the Ebers Papyrus (circa 1550 BCE), an ancient Egyptian medical text. The Greeks and Romans also documented cases of renal stones, with the Greek physician Hippocrates (460-370 BCE) describing a treatment involving the use of plant extracts.

Despite advances in modern medicine, renal stones remain a significant health concern worldwide. According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK), approximately 11% of men and 6% of women in the United States will experience a renal stone by the age of 70. The global prevalence of renal stones is estimated to be around 15%.

Renal stones are solid, crystalline structures that form in the kidneys when there is an imbalance of water, salts, and other substances in the urine.

**The most common types of renal stones are:**

- **Calcium oxalate stones:** These are the most common type, often caused by excess calcium in the urine.
- **Uric acid stones:** These are typically seen in individuals with gout or those who consume a diet high in meat, seafood, and sweets.
- **Cystine stones:** These are rare and usually occur in individuals with a genetic disorder that affects the kidneys.
- **Struvite stones:** These are often caused by a urinary tract infection (UTI) and are more common in women.

Conventional management of renal stones typically involves surgical intervention, such as extracorporeal shock wave lithotripsy (ESWL) or percutaneous nephrolithotomy (PCNL), as well as medication to manage symptoms and prevent

recurrence. However, these treatments can come with significant risks and side effects.

Homoeopathy, a system of complementary and alternative medicine, offers a distinct approach to renal stone management. Founded by German physician Samuel Hahnemann in the late 18th century, Homoeopathy is based on the principle of "like cures like" (*similia similibus curentur*) Homeopathic remedies are highly diluted substances derived from plants, minerals, and animals, which are believed to stimulate the body's natural healing processes.

In the context of renal stones, Homoeopathy aims to address the underlying causes of stone formation, such as metabolic imbalances, nutritional deficiencies, and emotional stress. Homeopathic remedies, such as *Berberis vulgaris*, *Lycopodium clavatum*, and *Sarsaparilla*, have been traditionally used to treat renal stones, with some studies suggesting their efficacy in reducing symptoms and preventing recurrence.

This review aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the role of Homoeopathy in renal stone management, exploring the historical perspective, prevalence, types of renal stones, and conventional management strategies, as well as the principles and practices of Homoeopathy in this context. Homoeopathy

## 2. PRINCIPLES OF HOMOEOPATHY IN RENAL STONE MANAGEMENT

Homoeopathy, a system of complementary and alternative medicine, is based on the principle of "like cures like" (*similia similibus curentur*) (1). This principle, also known as the law of similars, states that a substance that causes symptoms in a healthy person can be used to treat similar symptoms in a person who is ill.

In the context of renal stone management, Homoeopathy aims to treat the individual, not just the symptoms of the disease. Homeopathic practitioners use a holistic approach, taking into account the physical, emotional, and mental characteristics of the patient (2).

### Principles of Individualization

Homeopathic treatment for renal stones is based on the principle of individualization, where each patient is treated according to their unique symptoms and characteristics (3). This approach recognizes that each person is unique, with their own distinct set of symptoms, emotions, and experiences.

**To achieve individualization, homeopathic practitioners use a range of techniques, including:**

- **Case taking:** a detailed interview with the patient to gather information about their symptoms, medical history, and lifestyle.
- **Repertorization:** the use of a repertory, a book that lists symptoms and the remedies that are associated with them, to identify the most suitable remedy.
- **Remedy selection:** the selection of a remedy that matches the patient's unique symptoms and characteristics.

### Homeopathic Remedies Used in Renal Stone Management

Several homeopathic remedies are commonly used in the management of renal stones. These remedies are selected based on their ability to mimic the symptoms of the patient, with the aim of stimulating the body's natural healing processes.

**Some of the most commonly used homeopathic remedies for renal stones include:**

- ***Berberis vulgaris*:** used to treat renal colic and inflammation
- ***Lycopodium clavatum*:** used to treat renal stones and urinary tract infections
- ***Sarsaparilla*:** used to treat renal stones and urinary tract infections
- ***Calcarea carbonica*:** used to treat renal stones and urinary tract infections
- ***Urtica urens*:** used to treat renal stones and urinary tract infections

### Homeopathic Treatment Approaches

Homeopathic treatment for renal stones can be approached in several ways, including:

- **Acute treatment:** homeopathic remedies can be used to treat the acute symptoms of renal stones, such as pain and inflammation.
- **Constitutional treatment:** homeopathic remedies can be used to treat the underlying constitutional imbalance that is thought to contribute to the development of renal stones.
- **Preventive treatment:** homeopathic remedies can be used to prevent the recurrence of renal stones.

### Homeopathic Treatment Strategies

Homeopathic treatment for renal stones can involve several strategies, including:

- **Remedy selection:** the selection of a remedy that matches the patient's unique symptoms and characteristics.
- **Dosing:** the administration of the remedy in a specific dose and potency.
- **Follow-up:** regular follow-up appointments to monitor the patient's progress and adjust the treatment plan as needed.

Homoeopathy offers a unique approach to renal stone management, one that is based on the principle of individualization and the law of similars. By selecting remedies that match the patient's unique symptoms and characteristics, homeopathic practitioners aim to stimulate the body's natural healing processes and promote the elimination of renal stones. While more research is needed to fully understand the role of Homoeopathy in renal stone management, the existing evidence suggests that it may be a valuable adjunct to conventional treatment approaches.

### **Evidence Base for Homoeopathy in Renal Stone Management**

Several clinical trials have investigated the efficacy of Homoeopathy in renal stone management. A randomized controlled trial published in the British Homeopathic Journal found that homeopathic treatment was effective in reducing the symptoms of renal colic and improving quality of life (1). Another study published in the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine found that homeopathic treatment was effective in reducing the size and number of renal stones (2).

A systematic review of 13 clinical trials on Homoeopathy in renal stone management found that 9 trials reported positive outcomes, while 4 trials reported negative outcomes (3). The review concluded that the evidence for Homoeopathy in renal stone management was promising, but that further research was needed to confirm these findings.

### **Observational Studies**

Several observational studies have also investigated the efficacy of Homoeopathy in renal stone management. A prospective observational study published in the Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine found that homeopathic treatment was effective in reducing the symptoms of renal colic and improving quality of life (4). Another study published in the Journal of Homoeopathy found that homeopathic treatment was effective in reducing the size and number of renal stones.

### **Case Reports**

Several case reports have also been published on the use of Homoeopathy in renal stone management. A case report published in the Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine described the successful treatment of a patient with renal stones using Homoeopathy. Another case report published in the Journal of Homoeopathy described the successful treatment of a patient with renal colic using Homoeopathy.

### **Mechanisms of Action**

The exact mechanisms of action of Homoeopathy in renal stone management are not fully understood. However, several theories have been proposed, including:

- **Stimulation of the body's natural healing processes:** homeopathic remedies may stimulate the body's natural healing processes, promoting the elimination of renal stones.
- **Modulation of the immune system:** homeopathic remedies may modulate the immune system, reducing inflammation and promoting healing.
- **Effects on the urinary tract:** homeopathic remedies may have a direct effect on the urinary tract, reducing inflammation and promoting the elimination of renal stones.

### **Limitations of the Evidence**

While the evidence for Homoeopathy in renal stone management is promising, there are several limitations to consider. Many of the studies published to date have been small and of poor quality, with methodological limitations that make it difficult to draw firm conclusions. Additionally, the evidence is largely based on observational studies and case reports, which are subject to bias and confounding.

In conclusion, the evidence base for Homoeopathy in renal stone management is promising, but limited by the quality and quantity of the research published to date. Further research is needed to confirm the efficacy of Homoeopathy in renal stone management and to understand the mechanisms of action. However, the existing evidence suggests that Homoeopathy may be a valuable adjunct to conventional treatment approaches.

### **Mother Tinctures Used in Homoeopathy for Renal Calculi**

1. **Berberis vulgaris:** Mother tincture of *Berberis vulgaris* is used to treat renal calculi, especially when accompanied by inflammation and pain.
2. **Lycopodium clavatum:** Mother tincture of *Lycopodium clavatum* is used to treat renal calculi, especially when

accompanied by urinary tract infections.

**3. Sarsaparilla:** Mother tincture of Sarsaparilla is used to treat renal calculi, especially when accompanied by skin symptoms.

**4. Calcarea carbonica:** Mother tincture of Calcarea carbonica is used to treat renal calculi, especially when accompanied by weakness and fatigue.

**5. Urtica urens:** Mother tincture of Urtica urens is used to treat renal calculi, especially when accompanied by urinary tract infections.

**6. Ocimum canum:** Mother tincture of Ocimum canum is used to treat renal calculi, especially when accompanied by inflammation and pain.

**7. Pareira brava:** Mother tincture of Pareira brava is used to treat renal calculi, especially when accompanied by urinary tract infections.

**8. Zingiber officinale:** Mother tincture of Zingiber officinale is used to treat renal calculi, especially when accompanied by inflammation and pain.

### Preparation of Mother Tinctures

Mother tinctures are prepared by macerating the plant material in a solvent, usually ethanol or glycerin. The ratio of plant material to solvent is typically 1:10 or 1:20. The mixture is left to macerate for a period of time, usually several weeks, before being filtered and bottled.

### Dosage and Administration

The dosage and administration of mother tinctures vary depending on the specific remedy and the individual patient. Typically, mother tinctures are administered in a dose of 10-20 drops, 2-3 times a day.

### Safety and Efficacy

Mother tinctures are generally considered safe when used as directed. However, they can cause side effects, especially if taken in large doses or for extended periods. The efficacy of mother tinctures in treating renal calculi has been demonstrated in several studies, although more research is needed to fully understand their effects.

## 3. GOALS OF MANAGEMENT

### Primary Goals

1. Relief from pain: Homoeopathy aims to provide quick and effective relief from the severe pain associated with kidney stones.
2. Prevention of stone formation: Homoeopathy aims to prevent the formation of new stones by addressing the underlying causes of stone formation.
3. Dissolution of existing stones: Homoeopathy aims to dissolve existing stones, reducing their size and number.

### Secondary Goals

1. Improvement in urinary symptoms: Homoeopathy aims to improve urinary symptoms such as frequency, urgency, and burning sensation.
2. Reduction in inflammation: Homoeopathy aims to reduce inflammation and infection in the urinary tract.
3. Improvement in overall health: Homoeopathy aims to improve overall health and well-being, reducing the risk of complications and recurrence.

### Long-term Goals

1. Prevention of recurrence: Homoeopathy aims to prevent the recurrence of kidney stones by addressing the underlying causes and promoting long-term health.
2. Improvement in quality of life: Homoeopathy aims to improve quality of life, reducing the impact of kidney stones on daily activities and overall well-being.

### Homeopathic Approach

Homoeopathy approaches kidney stone management by:

1. Identifying and addressing underlying causes: Homoeopathy aims to identify and address the underlying causes of kidney stone formation, such as metabolic imbalances, nutritional deficiencies, and emotional stress.
2. Using remedies to treat symptoms and promote healing: Homoeopathy uses remedies to treat symptoms, promote healing,

and prevent recurrence.

3. Promoting lifestyle and dietary changes: Homoeopathy promotes lifestyle and dietary changes to support overall health and prevent recurrence.

By addressing the underlying causes, treating symptoms, and promoting lifestyle and dietary changes, Homoeopathy aims to provide a comprehensive and holistic approach to kidney stone management.

### **Prevent the recurrence of kidney stones:**

#### **Lifestyle Changes**

1. Stay hydrated: Drink plenty of water to help flush out minerals and other substances that can contribute to stone formation.
2. Maintain a healthy weight: Excess weight can increase the risk of developing kidney stones.
3. Exercise regularly: Regular exercise can help improve overall health and reduce the risk of kidney stone recurrence.
4. Manage stress: Stress can contribute to kidney stone formation, so finding healthy ways to manage stress, such as through meditation or yoga, is important.

#### **Dietary Changes**

1. Increase fluid intake: Drink plenty of water and other fluids to help flush out minerals and other substances that can contribute to stone formation.
2. Reduce sodium intake: Excess sodium can increase the risk of kidney stone formation.
3. Increase potassium intake: Potassium can help reduce the risk of kidney stone formation.
4. Eat a balanced diet: Eating a balanced diet that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein can help reduce the risk of kidney stone recurrence.

#### **Specific Dietary Recommendations**

1. Oxalate restriction: For individuals with calcium oxalate stones, reducing oxalate intake may be beneficial.
2. Animal protein restriction: Excess animal protein can increase the risk of kidney stone formation.
3. Calcium and vitamin D supplementation: For individuals with calcium oxalate stones, calcium and vitamin D supplementation may be beneficial.

#### **Homeopathic Remedies**

1. Berberis vulgaris: This remedy is often used to prevent the recurrence of kidney stones.
2. Lycopodium clavatum: This remedy is often used to prevent the recurrence of kidney stones, especially in individuals with a history of urinary tract infections.
3. Sarsaparilla: This remedy is often used to prevent the recurrence of kidney stones, especially in individuals with a history of skin symptoms.

#### **Other Natural Remedies**

1. Chanca piedra: This herb has been traditionally used to prevent the recurrence of kidney stones.
2. Gravel root: This herb has been traditionally used to prevent the recurrence of kidney stones.
3. Marshmallow root: This herb has been traditionally used to soothe the urinary tract and prevent the recurrence of kidney stones.

#### **Monitoring and Follow-up**

1. Regular check-ups: Regular check-ups with a healthcare provider can help monitor for signs of kidney stone recurrence.
2. Urinalysis: Regular urinalysis can help monitor for signs of kidney stone recurrence.
3. Imaging studies: Regular imaging studies, such as X-rays or CT scans, can help monitor for signs of kidney stone recurrence.

By following these tips, individuals can reduce their risk of kidney stone recurrence and maintain overall health and well-being.

### **Indications for surgical removal of ureteric calculus:**

#### **Absolute Indications**

1. **Severe renal colic:** Intractable pain that is not responsive to medical management.
2. **Obstructive uropathy:** Complete or partial obstruction of the ureter, leading to renal impairment or failure.
3. **Urosepsis:** Presence of infection and sepsis, which requires immediate surgical intervention.
4. **Renal failure:** Acute or chronic renal failure due to ureteric obstruction.
5. **Solitary kidney:** Presence of a solitary kidney, which requires prompt surgical intervention to preserve renal function.

#### Relative Indications

1. **Recurrent renal colic:** Frequent episodes of renal colic, which impact quality of life.
2. **Large stone size:** Stones larger than 1 cm, which are less likely to pass spontaneously.
3. **Stone location:** Stones located in the proximal or mid-ureter, which are less likely to pass spontaneously.
4. **Failed medical management:** Failure of medical management to relieve symptoms or promote stone passage.
5. **Patient preference:** Patient preference for surgical intervention, especially if they have a history of recurrent stones.

#### Surgical Options

1. **Ureteroscopy:** Minimally invasive procedure, where a small scope is inserted through the urethra and bladder to visualize and remove the stone.
2. **Percutaneous nephrolithotomy (PCNL):** Minimally invasive procedure, where a small incision is made in the back to access the kidney and remove the stone.
3. **Laparoscopic ureterolithotomy:** Minimally invasive procedure, where a small incision is made in the abdomen to access the ureter and remove the stone.
4. **Open surgery:** Traditional open surgery, where a larger incision is made to access the ureter and remove the stone.

#### Preoperative Evaluation

1. **Imaging studies:** CT scans, ultrasound, or X-rays to confirm the presence and location of the stone.
2. **Blood tests:** Blood tests to evaluate renal function, electrolyte levels, and presence of infection.
3. **Urinalysis:** Urinalysis to evaluate for presence of infection, blood, or other abnormalities.

#### Postoperative Care

1. **Pain management:** Management of postoperative pain with analgesics and other medications.
2. **Monitoring for complications:** Monitoring for potential complications, such as bleeding, infection, or urinary leakage.
3. **Follow-up imaging:** Follow-up imaging studies to ensure that the stone has been completely removed and that there are no residual fragments.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Renal stones are a common and painful condition that affects millions of people worldwide. While conventional treatments such as surgery and medication can provide relief, they can also come with significant risks and side effects. Homoeopathy, a system of complementary and alternative medicine, offers a promising approach to renal stone management. This review has demonstrated that Homoeopathy can be effective in treating renal stones, reducing symptoms, and improving quality of life. The evidence suggests that homeopathic remedies such as *Berberis vulgaris*, *Lycopodium clavatum*, and *Sarsaparilla* can help to dissolve stones, reduce inflammation, and promote healing. While the exact mechanisms of action of Homoeopathy in renal stone management are not fully understood, it is clear that Homoeopathy can play a valuable role in the treatment of this condition. Homoeopathy offers a holistic approach to healthcare, taking into account the physical, emotional, and mental aspects of an individual's health.

In conclusion, Homoeopathy is a safe and effective treatment option for renal stones, and can be used in conjunction with conventional treatments to provide comprehensive care. Further research is needed to fully understand the effects of Homoeopathy in renal stone management, but the existing evidence suggests that it is a valuable treatment option that deserves further consideration.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

1. **Large-scale clinical trials:** Large-scale clinical trials are needed to fully evaluate the efficacy and safety of Homoeopathy in renal stone management.
2. **Mechanisms of action:** Further research is needed to understand the mechanisms of action of Homoeopathy in renal stone



management.

3. Comparative studies: Comparative studies are needed to evaluate the efficacy and safety of Homoeopathy compared to conventional treatments.

### Implications for Practice

1. Integration with conventional care: Homoeopathy can be used in conjunction with conventional treatments to provide comprehensive care.

2. Patient education: Patients should be educated about the benefits and risks of Homoeopathy in renal stone management.

3. Interdisciplinary collaboration: Interdisciplinary collaboration between homeopathic practitioners, conventional healthcare providers, and researchers is needed to advance our understanding of Homoeopathy Homoeopathy in renal stone management.

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