

Homoeopathic Oath

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Abstract

The oath of medical students is in news as the National Medical Commission (NMC) proposed to replace the Hippocratic oath with the Charak oath for the students of medical colleges in India as on February 7th 2022. The NMC replaced the Medical Council of India (MCI) in September 2020 [14]. The issue got highlighted further with the students of Madurai medical college took the Charak oath instead of the Hippocratic oath in 2022 [1]. Further, in Lucknow, breaking a 110 year old tradition, the students of King George Medical University (KGMU) took Charak Shapath on the first day of 2021-22 sessions [3]. The current article sees through the oath lens & makes an effort to remind Homoeopathic fraternity to remember the Homoeopathic oath or the aphorism of the Organon of Medicine as written by Dr. Hahnemann, the founder of Homoeopathy [5]. The article assumes significance with the Times of India newspaper printing the above-mentioned aphorism as the thought for the day on 12.2.2022 in its editorial page. Further, there is an editorial column regarding the oath below the thought for the day. The relevant page is given in the figure 1 of this article.

Keywords: Homoeopathy, Organon of Medicine, Hippocratic oath, Charak oath, MERS, SARS.

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INTRODUCTION

The medical oath is attributed to Hippocrates of the island of Kos, Greece. He is known as the father of medicine. The original oath or the updated version dates back to late 3rd Century A.D. and the British Medical Journal published an extract in October 1998 [2].

The oath in medical fraternity across the globe is the Hippocratic Oath that is 2,500 years old. It was written in 5th century B.C. It is the oldest document in history that upholds the art of medicine. The medical historian mentions Hippocrates as synthetic where as Galen was analytic [6]. It is mentioned in the Greek

medical texts where a new physician needs to swear by a number of healing gods to uphold specific ethical standards. The oath goes like this [3]-

“I swear to fulfil, to the best of my ability & judgement. I will respect the hard won scientific gains of those physicians in whose steps I walk & gladly share such knowledge as is mine with those who are to follow”.

If we trace the history, we find that the Geneva Declaration of the second general assembly of WHO is the oldest policy of World Medical Association. It lays emphasis on respect for human rights of patients, value of sharing knowledge with community & profession,

right & obligation of physicians to care for them. It was adopted in 1948 & amended six times till date the last in 2017 [7].

Currently in India, the National Medical Commission has advocated for the Charak oath in India since 2022. The oath says [3]-

“Physicians to eliminate their biases, combat disinformation to improve health literacy & be an ally to minorities & other underserved groups in society”.

The Charak Samhita is a collection of commentaries on medical practices that dates from the 1st to 2nd century AD. It is the foundational text of ancient Indian medicine. An extract was published in the book ‘Wonder that was India’ in 1954 [2].



Figure 1: Hahneman’s aphorism from Organon of Medicine in TOI, Lucknow Edition dated 12th February, 2022

About Organon of Medicine & the Oath [5]

Hahnemann introduced the concept of Homoeopathy to the world in 1810 through his book ‘Organon of Medicine’ & Dr. R.E. Dudgeon presented the English version of the book to the world in 1893, 50 years after his death in 1843. The thought for today is related to the aphorism 1 of the Organon of Medicine book out of the total 294 aphorisms. The book was written in aphoristic style as per the tradition during 19th century. It is a text book for the homoeopathic graduates where they study the principles, doctrines & philosophy ascribed to homoeopathy.

Relevance of the Oath

The onset of COVID 19 pandemic has brought the viral diseases in to the lime light [10-13]. Recently, health authorities in the United Kingdom (UK) have confirmed a case of Monkeypox [4, 8, 9], a rare viral infection similar to Smallpox, in an individual who travelled from Nigeria to the UK. According to US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), Monkeypox begins with a fever, headache, muscle

ache, back ache & exhaustion. It also causes the lymph nodes to swell, which small pox does not. The incubation period is 7-14 days but can range from 5-21 days. Usually, within a day to 3 days of the onset of the fever, the patient develops a rash that begins on the face & spreads to other parts of the body. The eruptions can last up to 2 to 4 weeks. There is no treatment in modern medicine & only supportive treatment is to be given depending on the symptoms [4, 8, 9].

It is here that Homoeopathy can help effectively in dealing with new viral infections. The current century will be the viral infection century seeing the trends in prevalence of viral infections like measles, chickenpox, dengue, chikungunya, swine flu, bird flu, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, Middle East Respiratory Syndrome & the COVID 19 [10-13].

If the oath is followed by each Homoeopath while acquiring homoeopathic skills through continuous practice, homoeopathy can be the front runner among

the therapeutic systems while addressing the viral attacks globally.

The Way Ahead

The National Commission on Homoeopathy (NCH) can allow the Charak Shapath in all the homoeopathic medical colleges while also reading out the relevant aphorism mentioned in the above figure as the Homoeopathic Oath. It will be a real tribute to Hahnemann & his followers who worked hard across Europe & US to build the base of the therapeutic system.

The practice will certainly percolate principles of Hahnemann & homoeopathy to the homoeopathic fraternity & masses more effectively.

Homoeopathic Oath- Current situation

Currently, in the public domain, no homoeopathic medical college has ever put out any oath being given to students in their websites. It is time that the NCH puts the 1st aphorism as the oath in its official website as the homoeopathic oath along with the Charak Shapath or the Hippocratic oath. It is expected that all the homoeopathic students take the oath when the new academic session starts.

CONCLUSION

The admission of the oath will enrich the homoeopathic students as there will be value addition. They will continue to practice effectively & be able to deal with new viral variants/diseases that will continue to emerge. It is not possible for the man kind to wait for vaccines for each variant/viral disease. No vaccine can be a panacea for the emerging variants of a single virus or other emerging viral diseases. It is here that the cost effectiveness & clinical effectiveness of Homoeopathy will come handy for the public & private health systems while dealing with masses for a developing country like India.

Declaration

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