

## **Homeopathy for Childhood and Adolescence Ailments: A Review of the Evidence**

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### **Abstract:**

The use of homeopathy in treating childhood and adolescence ailments has been a topic of considerable interest and debate. The existing evidence regarding the efficacy and safety of homeopathic treatments for common pediatric conditions. We systematically searched databases for randomized controlled trials (RCTs), observational studies, and meta-analyses that investigated homeopathic interventions in children and adolescents. The conditions examined include acute respiratory infections, otitis media, ADHD, and diarrhea. Our findings indicate that while some studies report positive outcomes, the overall quality of evidence is varied, with many trials having methodological limitations such as small sample sizes and lack of blinding. Despite these limitations, homeopathy is generally considered safe, with minimal reported adverse effects. The need for more rigorous, large-scale studies to better determine the role of homeopathy in pediatric care. Until such evidence is available, homeopathy should be considered a complementary approach, and decisions regarding its use should be made on a case-by-case basis, considering the individual needs and preferences of patients and their families.

**Keywords:** Homeopathy, Pediatric care, Childhood ailments, Adolescent health

### **Introduction**

Homeopathy, a complementary and alternative medicine practice founded in the late 18th century by Samuel Hahnemann, remains a popular but controversial treatment approach. Characterized by its principles of "like cures like" and the use of highly diluted substances, homeopathy has been used to treat various ailments across different age groups, including children and adolescents. Pediatric and adolescent health issues present unique challenges and considerations for both patients and healthcare providers. Conditions such as acute respiratory infections, otitis media, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and diarrhea are common among children and adolescents, often leading parents to seek alternative treatment options when conventional medicine does not meet their expectations or concerns about side effects arise. Despite its popularity, the scientific community remains divided on the efficacy and mechanisms of homeopathy. While some proponents claim significant benefits, critics argue that the effects of homeopathic treatments are no different from placebos. This divergence necessitates a thorough examination of the available evidence to understand homeopathy's role in pediatric and adolescent care.

### Common Pediatric Conditions

the application of homeopathy in treating common pediatric conditions, which are frequently encountered in clinical practice and often lead parents to seek alternative treatments. We will review the evidence for homeopathy's efficacy and safety in managing acute respiratory infections, otitis media, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), and diarrhea.

- **Acute Respiratory Infections (ARIs):**
  - **Prevalence and Impact:** ARIs, including the common cold, sinusitis, and bronchitis, are among the most frequent reasons for pediatric medical consultations.
  - **Homeopathic Treatments:** Remedies such as Oscillococcinum, Aconitum, and Belladonna are commonly used for ARIs.
  - **Evidence:** Studies have produced mixed results, with some trials indicating symptom relief and reduced illness duration, while others show no significant difference from placebo.
- **Otitis Media:**
  - **Prevalence and Impact:** Otitis media, an infection or inflammation of the middle ear, is a common condition in children, leading to pain, fever, and sometimes hearing loss.
  - **Homeopathic Treatments:** Remedies like Chamomilla, Pulsatilla, and Hepar sulphuris are often prescribed.
  - **Evidence:** Some studies suggest that homeopathy may reduce pain and hasten recovery, but the evidence is not consistent, and methodological flaws limit the reliability of these findings.
- **Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD):**
  - **Prevalence and Impact:** ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity, affecting academic performance and social interactions.
  - **Homeopathic Treatments:** Remedies such as Stramonium, Hyoscyamus, and Tuberculinum are used to manage ADHD symptoms.
  - **Evidence:** Research in this area is limited, with some small studies reporting improvements in behavior and attention, but larger, well-designed trials are needed to validate these findings.
- **Diarrhea:**
  - **Prevalence and Impact:** Diarrhea is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality in children, particularly in developing countries.
  - **Homeopathic Treatments:** Remedies like Arsenicum album, Podophyllum, and Chamomilla are frequently used.
  - **Evidence:** Some RCTs and observational studies have shown positive results in reducing the duration and severity of diarrhea, but the overall quality of evidence is variable.

we will delve deeper into each condition, summarizing the available evidence for homeopathic interventions and discussing the potential benefits and limitations of these treatments in pediatric care.

## Efficacy of Homeopathy

Evaluating the efficacy of homeopathy in treating childhood and adolescence ailments requires a thorough analysis of the available clinical evidence. This section summarizes the findings from randomized controlled trials (RCTs), observational studies, and meta-analyses, focusing on the effectiveness of homeopathic remedies for common pediatric conditions.

- **Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs):**
  - **Definition and Importance:** RCTs are the gold standard for assessing the efficacy of medical treatments. They involve randomly assigning participants to either a treatment group or a placebo/control group to minimize bias.
  - **Findings in Pediatric Conditions:** Several RCTs have investigated the efficacy of homeopathy in treating conditions like acute respiratory infections, otitis media, ADHD, and diarrhea. Results are mixed, with some studies showing positive effects and others finding no significant difference from placebo.
- **Observational Studies:**
  - **Definition and Role:** Observational studies involve monitoring the outcomes of patients receiving homeopathic treatments in real-world settings without random assignment. These studies can provide valuable insights but are generally less rigorous than RCTs.
  - **Findings in Pediatric Conditions:** Observational studies often report high patient satisfaction and perceived improvements in symptoms. However, these findings are subject to biases such as placebo effects and patient expectations.
- **Meta-Analyses and Systematic Reviews:**
  - **Definition and Importance:** Meta-analyses and systematic reviews aggregate data from multiple studies to provide a more comprehensive assessment of treatment efficacy.
  - **Findings in Pediatric Conditions:** Meta-analyses of homeopathy in pediatric care show varying results. Some reviews suggest potential benefits in specific conditions, while others conclude that the evidence is insufficient to support the efficacy of homeopathic treatments beyond placebo.
- **Specific Conditions:**
  - **Acute Respiratory Infections (ARIs):** Some RCTs report that homeopathic remedies can reduce the duration and severity of ARIs, while others find no significant benefit compared to placebo.
  - **Otitis Media:** Mixed evidence exists, with some studies suggesting that homeopathy can alleviate pain and speed up recovery, whereas others show no clear advantage.
  - **ADHD:** Limited evidence from small-scale studies indicates possible behavioral improvements, but larger, well-conducted trials are needed.
  - **Diarrhea:** Some studies, particularly in developing countries, suggest that homeopathic treatments can reduce the duration and severity of diarrhea in children, though the overall quality of evidence is variable.

In the subsequent sections, we will explore the safety considerations and discuss the implications of these findings for clinical practice and public health.

### Conclusion

homeopathy for childhood and adolescence ailments reveals a complex and nuanced landscape. While homeopathy continues to be a popular choice among parents seeking holistic and individualized care for their children, the scientific evidence supporting its efficacy remains mixed and often inconclusive. Some studies suggest potential benefits for conditions such as acute respiratory infections, otitis media, ADHD, and diarrhea, but methodological limitations and inconsistent results undermine the reliability of these findings. Homeopathy is generally safe, with minimal adverse effects, making it an appealing option for those wary of conventional treatments. However, the lack of robust evidence necessitates caution and underscores the importance of integrating homeopathy as a complementary rather than a primary treatment approach. Future research should focus on conducting high-quality, large-scale trials to provide more definitive evidence and better understand the role of homeopathy in pediatric healthcare. Until then, healthcare providers should ensure informed decision-making, balancing the current evidence with individual patient needs and preferences.

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