

A Brief Review & Therapeutics on Sports Injuries and Homoeopathy: Short Communication

Shankha Subhra Patra,^{1*}Shankhadeep Pal,²Narayan Mandal,³Arindam Bhattacharjee³

¹Junior Research Fellow, CRU (T), Gangtok, Under Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH), Sikkim, India.

²Junior Research Fellow, Peripheral Pharmacovigilance Centre, Mahesh Bhattacharyya Homoeopathic Medical College and Hospital, West Bengal, India.

³Intern at Mahesh Bhattacharyya Homoeopathic Medical College & Hospital Dumurjala, Howrah West Bengal, India.

ABSTRACT:

Sports injuries are common among athletes and physically active individuals, often requiring effective treatment to prevent long-term complications. Conventional treatments, including painkillers and physiotherapy, provide symptomatic relief but may have side effects or limitations in long-term recovery. Homoeopathy, a complementary and alternative medicine system, has gained attention for its holistic approach to managing sports injuries. This review evaluates the efficacy of homoeopathic remedies in sports injury management by analyzing existing literature, clinical trials, and mechanistic insights.

KEYWORDS: Sports injuries, Homoeopathy, Alternative medicine.

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*Corresponding Author:

Dr. Shankha Subhra Patra

Junior Research Fellow, CRU (T), Gangtok

Under Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH), Sikkim, India

Email: sspatra686686@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION:

Sports medicine is a specialized branch of medicine that focuses on physical fitness, injury prevention, and the treatment of injuries related to sports and exercise. It integrates various disciplines, including orthopedics, exercise physiology, nutrition, psychology, and rehabilitation sciences, to optimize athletic performance and promote

overall well-being. With the growing awareness of fitness and sports participation worldwide, sports medicine has gained significant importance in preventing injuries, enhancing recovery, and ensuring the long-term health of athletes. ^[1] The origins of sports medicine can be traced back to ancient Greece and Rome, where physicians like Galen treated gladiators and athletes.

However, the field evolved significantly in the 20th century with the establishment of professional organizations like the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) in 1954. Since then, advancements in biomechanics, exercise physiology, and sports nutrition have contributed to the development of evidence-based approaches for injury management and performance enhancement.^[2]

Sports medicine encompasses various aspects, including injury prevention and rehabilitation, exercise physiology, sports nutrition, biomechanics, and sports psychology. Injury prevention strategies focus on proper warm-ups, strength training, flexibility exercises, and protective equipment to reduce the risk of sports-related injuries. Rehabilitation programs involve physiotherapy, functional training, and gradual return-to-play protocols to ensure a safe recovery from musculoskeletal injuries, fractures, and concussions.^[3]

Exercise physiology examines how the body responds to physical activity and helps in designing training regimens that optimize endurance, strength, and athletic performance. Understanding energy systems, cardiovascular adaptation, and muscle recovery is crucial in tailoring training programs to specific sports.^[4]

Sports nutrition plays a vital role in optimizing performance, recovery, and overall health. Proper dietary intake of macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins, and fats) and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals) is essential for sustaining energy levels, promoting muscle repair, and preventing fatigue. Hydration strategies and electrolyte balance are equally critical, particularly in endurance sports where dehydration can impair performance^[5].

Biomechanics, the study of human movement, applies principles of physics to

analyze athletic techniques and develop strategies to improve efficiency and prevent injuries. Motion analysis technology is widely used in elite sports to refine techniques and enhance performance by identifying biomechanical flaws.^[6]

Psychological factors play a significant role in sports performance and rehabilitation. Sports psychology addresses issues such as motivation, anxiety, mental resilience, and focus, which impact an athlete's ability to perform under pressure. Techniques like cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), mindfulness, and visualization are used to enhance concentration and mental toughness. Athletes recovering from injuries often require psychological support to regain confidence and cope with the stress of being sidelined.^[7]

Common sports injuries include muscle strains, ligament sprains, fractures, dislocations, and concussions. Muscle strains and sprains occur due to overstretching or tearing of muscle fibers or ligaments, and their treatment involves the RICE protocol (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation) followed by rehabilitation exercises. Fractures and dislocations require immobilization, surgical intervention in severe cases, and gradual rehabilitation. Concussions, particularly in contact sports like football and boxing, demand careful assessment, cognitive rest, and a stepwise return-to-play protocol to prevent long-term neurological consequences.^[8]

Recent advancements in sports medicine have revolutionized injury diagnosis, treatment, and performance monitoring. Wearable technology, including GPS trackers and heart rate monitors, allows real-time analysis of physiological parameters, helping athletes and coaches optimize training loads and prevent overtraining^[9]. Regenerative medicine, such as platelet-rich plasma (PRP) therapy and stem cell treatments, has shown

promising results in accelerating the healing of tendon and ligament injuries.^[10] Virtual reality (VR) rehabilitation is emerging as an innovative approach to recovery, offering interactive and engaging therapy sessions for athletes undergoing physical and cognitive rehabilitation^[11]. The future of sports medicine lies in personalized treatment approaches, AI-driven sports analytics, and advancements in genetic profiling to predict injury risks. Research continues to explore the ethical implications of performance-enhancing drugs, athlete safety, and the long-term effects of repeated head injuries in contact sports.

As the field progresses, a greater emphasis on evidence-based practices, injury prevention, and athlete-centered care will drive innovation in sports medicine ^[12]. Sports injuries are an inevitable part of an athlete's life, affecting both professional and amateur players across various disciplines. These injuries range from minor strains and sprains to severe fractures and concussions, often requiring prompt and effective management to ensure optimal recovery and prevent long-term disabilities. The conventional approach to treating sports injuries primarily includes pain management through nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), physiotherapy, and, in some cases, surgical intervention. While these treatments can be effective, they may not always facilitate the body's innate healing mechanisms and may come with side effects such as gastrointestinal issues, dependency, and prolonged recovery times ^[13]. Homoeopathy has emerged as a complementary and alternative medical approach that offers a holistic treatment strategy for sports injuries. Rooted in the principle of "similia similibus curentur" (like cures like), homoeopathy employs highly

diluted natural substances to stimulate the body's self-healing processes.

Unlike conventional medicine, which primarily focuses on symptomatic relief, homoeopathic remedies aim to enhance the body's resilience, reduce inflammation, and expedite tissue regeneration. Remedies such as *Arnica montana*, *Rhus toxicodendron*, and *Symphytum officinale* have been traditionally used for treating various musculoskeletal injuries, demonstrating potential benefits in reducing pain, swelling, and recovery time ^[14]. Despite growing interest, the integration of homoeopathy into sports medicine remains controversial due to the limited availability of large-scale clinical trials. However, observational studies and some controlled trials suggest that homoeopathic remedies may offer effective support in injury management, particularly for soft tissue trauma, joint injuries, and fractures ^[15]. Given the increasing number of athletes seeking alternative therapies, understanding the role of homoeopathy in sports injury treatment is crucial. This review explores the efficacy of homoeopathic remedies in managing sports injuries, critically analyzing existing literature, clinical evidence, and potential mechanisms of action to provide a comprehensive perspective on its therapeutic potential. Sports injuries range from acute trauma, such as fractures and sprains, to chronic conditions like tendinitis and muscle strain. Conventional medicine typically addresses pain management and inflammation but may not accelerate the body's natural healing process. Homoeopathy, based on the principle of "like cures like," uses highly diluted substances to stimulate the body's self-healing mechanisms. Several remedies have been traditionally used for musculoskeletal

injuries, raising interest in their potential role in sports medicine ^[14].

METHODOLOGY:

This review follows a systematic approach to analyze the role of homoeopathy in sports injury management. A comprehensive literature search was conducted using electronic databases such as PubMed, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar. Keywords including "homoeopathy," "sports injuries," "musculoskeletal trauma," "alternative medicine in sports," were used to identify relevant studies.

Inclusion criteria comprised peer-reviewed articles, clinical trials, meta-analyses, and case reports published in English over the past 20 years i.e. 1st Jan 2004 to 31st Dec 2024.. Studies focusing on homoeopathic interventions for acute and chronic sports injuries, pain management, inflammation reduction, and recovery enhancement were prioritized. Exclusion criteria involved studies with insufficient data, non-peer-reviewed sources, and articles not directly related to homoeopathic treatment in sports injuries.

The data extracted from selected studies included sample size, intervention details, study outcomes, and statistical significance of homoeopathic treatment effectiveness. Findings were critically analyzed to assess homoeopathy's role, effectiveness, and limitations in sports injury management. Research gaps were also identified to provide future study recommendations.

Common Sports Injuries and Their Homoeopathic Management

Sprains and Strains

Sprains involve ligament injuries, while strains affect muscles and tendons. Homoeopathic remedies such as Arnica montana are widely used for soft tissue

injuries, reducing pain, swelling, and bruising.^[15] Rhus toxicodendron is beneficial for stiffness and pain aggravated by initial movement and relieved by continued activity, while Ruta graveolens is effective in treating ligamentous and tendon injuries.^[16]

Fractures and Bone Injuries

Fractures require immobilization, but homoeopathic remedies can support bone healing. Symphytum officinale (Comfrey), known as "bone-knit," accelerates callus formation and promotes fracture healing.^[17] Calcarea phosphorica enhances calcium metabolism, aiding bone regeneration.^[18]

Tendinitis and Bursitis

Repetitive motion often leads to tendon and bursa inflammation. Bryonia alba is used for inflammation with severe pain aggravated by movement, while Ruta graveolens is useful for chronic tendon irritation and overuse syndromes.^[13]

Concussions and Head Injuries

Head trauma, common in contact sports, can have long-term consequences. Arnica montana is recommended for head injuries, reducing hemorrhage and swelling. Hypericum perforatum is effective for nerve damage and traumatic pain ^[16]

Muscle Cramps and Fatigue

Overuse of muscles leads to cramps and fatigue, affecting performance. Cuprum metallicum is beneficial for severe muscle cramps and spasms, while Magnesia phosphorica is used for muscle pain relieved by warmth and pressure.^[15]

Acute Injuries and Homoeopathy

Acute injuries, such as sprains, fractures, and muscle strains, are common in sports and often require immediate attention to prevent

further damage and promote recovery. Homoeopathy offers a range of remedies that can be used in the acute phase of injury, including *Arnica montana*, *Rhus toxicodendron*, and *Calendula officinalis*. These remedies are often administered topically or orally and are believed to reduce inflammation, alleviate pain, and enhance the body's natural healing processes ^{[19] [20]}.

Topical applications, such as creams and gels, are particularly useful for localized injuries. These preparations often contain ingredients like arnica, which is known for its anti-inflammatory properties, and calendula, which is commonly used to promote wound healing. Some studies suggest that these topical remedies can be as effective as conventional treatments in managing pain and inflammation, making them a popular choice among athletes seeking natural alternatives to pharmaceuticals ^{[21] [22]}.

Chronic Pain and Homoeopathy

Chronic pain, which persists beyond the normal healing period, is a significant challenge in sports medicine. Conditions such as tendinitis, bursitis, and chronic low back pain can have a debilitating impact on an athlete's performance and quality of life. Homoeopathy offers a promising alternative to conventional pain management strategies, which often rely on analgesics and anti-inflammatory drugs. These medications, while effective in the short term, can have adverse side effects and may not address the underlying causes of pain ^{[23] [22]}.

Homoeopathic remedies, on the other hand, are designed to treat the root causes of pain rather than just its symptoms. Remedies such as *Rhus toxicodendron* and *Bryonia alba* are commonly used to treat chronic musculoskeletal pain, with studies indicating

significant improvements in pain severity and functional ability ^[24]. Additionally, homoeopathy's focus on individualization allows for tailored treatment plans that address the unique needs and symptoms of each patient, making it a versatile option for managing chronic pain in athletes.

Evidence Supporting Homoeopathy in Sports Medicine

The evidence supporting the use of homoeopathy in sports medicine is growing, with several studies demonstrating its efficacy in treating both acute and chronic conditions. A randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trial conducted at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital found that Homoeopathic treatment significantly improved functional outcomes in patients with mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI). The study, which involved 60 patients, reported improvements in difficulty with situations, symptom rating, and participation in daily activities, suggesting that homoeopathy may play a role in the management of MTBI ^[25].

Another study published in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* explored the effectiveness of individualized homoeopathic intervention in managing arthralgia. The study, which involved 200 patients with joint pain, found that homoeopathic treatment led to a statistically significant reduction in pain severity, as measured by the Visual Analog Scale (VAS). These findings suggest that homoeopathy can be a viable alternative to analgesics for managing joint pain in athletes ^[24].

Controversies and Criticisms

Despite the growing body of evidence supporting the use of homoeopathy in sports medicine, the practice remains controversial. Critics argue that the

principles of homoeopathy, particularly the concept of dilution and dynamization, lack a scientific basis. Some studies have failed to demonstrate the efficacy of homoeopathic remedies beyond that of a placebo, leading to skepticism about its validity as a medical treatment ^[26].

Moreover, the variability in treatment approaches have raised concerns about the reliability and reproducibility of homoeopathic interventions. These criticisms highlight the need for further research to establish the efficacy and safety of homoeopathic remedies in sports medicine.

Table-1: Key Insights from Homoeopathic Studies in Sports Medicine

Condition	Homoeopathic Remedy	Outcome	Citation
Musculoskeletal Injuries	Arnica montana	Reduces pain and inflammation in acute injuries	19,21
Chronic Pain	Rhus toxicodendron	Significant reduction in pain severity in arthralgia	20,23
Mild Traumatic Brain Injury	Homoeopathic medicine	Improved functional outcomes in persistent MTBI	24
Low Back Pain	Lumbar Vertebra LM2	Proposed for short-term management of CNSLBP	22

Table-2: Commonly Used Homoeopathic Medicines for Sports Injuries

Homoeopathic Medicine	Indications
<i>Arnica Montana</i>	Bruises, muscle soreness, shock, swelling, post-injury recovery
<i>Rhus toxicodendron</i>	Sprains, ligament injuries, stiffness, pain aggravated by rest
<i>Ruta graveolens</i>	Tendon and ligament injuries, periosteal pain, fractures
<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Nerve injuries, shooting pain, crushed fingers or toes
<i>Bryonia alba</i>	Joint pain, inflammation, worse with movement, better with rest
<i>Ledum palustre</i>	Puncture wounds, black-and-blue bruises, cold injuries
<i>Symphytum officinale</i>	Fractures, bone injuries, non-healing wounds
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Deep muscle trauma, soreness, contusions
<i>Calcarea phosphorica</i>	Bone weakness, stress fractures, slow fracture healing
<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Hemorrhages, varicose veins, muscle soreness

Future Directions

The future of homoeopathy in sports medicine is promising, with ongoing research aimed at addressing the gaps in current knowledge. A study protocol published in the Journal of Clinical Trials outlines a randomized, double-blind, crossover, placebo-controlled clinical trial investigating the efficacy of a biotherapeutic lumbar vertebra (BIOVERT) for the short-

term management of chronic non-specific low back pain (CNSLBP). The study, which involves 120 participants, aims to assess the safety and therapeutic duration of the biotherapeutic intervention and could provide valuable insights into the role of homoeopathy in managing CNSLBP [22].

In addition to clinical trials, there is a growing interest in the use of homoeopathy for preventing sports injuries. By addressing

the underlying factors that contribute to injury risk, such as muscle imbalances and poor recovery, homoeopathic remedies may offer a proactive approach to injury prevention. This area of research holds significant potential for reducing the incidence of sports-related injuries and enhancing athletic performance.

DISCUSSION:

Sports injuries are common among athletes and physically active individuals, often leading to pain, inflammation, and limited mobility. Conventional treatments such as painkillers, physiotherapy, and surgical interventions are widely used; however, they may have side effects or require prolonged recovery time ^[27]. In recent years, homoeopathy has emerged as a complementary approach for managing sports injuries due to its holistic and individualized treatment principles. All the research work regarding homoeopathy and sports injury has been given in table 1.

Homoeopathic remedies like *Arnica montana*, *Rhus toxicodendron*, *Ruta graveolens*, and *Hypericum perforatum* have been traditionally used for pain relief, reducing inflammation, and enhancing tissue healing. Research suggests that *Arnica montana* can effectively reduce post-injury swelling and bruising, making it one of the most commonly used remedies in sports medicine ^[28]. Similarly, *Rhus toxicodendron* is recommended for sprains and strains, especially when pain worsens at rest but improves with movement ^[29]. *Ruta graveolens* is beneficial for ligament injuries and bone trauma, while *Hypericum perforatum* is used for nerve-related pain, such as those resulting from impact injuries ^[16]. The overview of the Homoeopathic therapeutics provide at table 2.

Despite these promising findings, a significant research gap exists regarding the efficacy and mechanism of homoeopathic treatment in sports injuries. Many studies are either small-scale or lack rigorous methodologies such as randomized controlled trials (RCTs) and objective outcome assessments ^[14]. Additionally, the skepticism surrounding homoeopathy within the medical community limits its integration into mainstream sports medicine. Future research should focus on conducting well-structured clinical trials to evaluate the effectiveness of homoeopathic remedies in treating sports-related injuries. Furthermore, comparative studies between homoeopathy and conventional treatments could provide valuable insights into its potential role as an adjunct therapy.

The incorporation of homoeopathy into sports rehabilitation programs requires greater awareness among athletes, coaches, and healthcare professionals. Standardized treatment protocols and evidence-based guidelines should be developed to optimize its application in sports injury management. Addressing these research gaps will help determine the true potential of homoeopathy in promoting faster recovery and improved athletic performance.

There is a lack of large-scale clinical trials, making it difficult to draw definitive conclusions about homoeopathy's efficacy in sports injuries. More research is required to elucidate the biochemical pathways involved in homoeopathic treatment of injuries. Exploring synergistic effects of homoeopathy with physiotherapy and conventional treatments could enhance treatment effectiveness.

CONCLUSION:

Homoeopathy offers a unique and holistic approach to sports medicine, with applications ranging from the treatment of acute injuries to the management of chronic pain. While the evidence supporting its efficacy is promising, further research is needed to address the controversies surrounding its use. As the field of sports medicine continues to evolve, homoeopathy may emerge as a valuable complement to conventional treatments, providing athletes with natural and effective options for optimizing their health and performance.

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