

## Press release

# STUDY HIGHLIGHTS No. 1/2022

**Homeopathy works beyond the placebo effect** – numerous high-quality scientific studies demonstrate this. In our new 'Study Highlights' series, we will be presenting examples of research which show the effectiveness of homeopathy beyond the placebo effect.

We begin with a study from 2019 on the use of homeopathy in women with premenstrual symptoms.

### Topic and lead author

Homeopathic treatment of women with premenstrual syndrome,  
by Dr. Michal Yakir, Israeli Association for Classical Homeopathy, Tel Aviv, Israel.

### What is the study about and what is the added value of homeopathic treatment?

Premenstrual syndrome (PMS) affects many women, causing symptoms such as abdominal pain, insomnia, anxiety and irritability before the menstrual period. PMS requires treatment in up to 20% of women in their reproductive years. Conventional drugs can reduce symptoms, but uncomfortable side effects are often reported, leading patients to look for other approaches like homeopathy. The current study, including 105 women, aged 20 to 50 years, with PMS, was designed as a randomised placebo-controlled double-blind trial, investigating the effectiveness of individually prescribed homeopathic medicines.

### What are the scientific results?

Two groups were compared, receiving either an individualised homeopathic treatment or placebo. Effectiveness was assessed by measuring PMS symptoms (premenstrual score), conventional drug use and number of sick days, comparing these values for the two months prior to treatment with the three months during treatment.

- There was greater improvement in the premenstrual score in the homeopathy group compared to the placebo group ( $p=0.043$ ).
- Women in the homeopathic group used significantly fewer conventional drugs during the treatment phase than those in the placebo group ( $p=0.043$ ).
- There was a greater reduction in sick days reported by women during the treatment phase in the homeopathy group than in the placebo group ( $p=0.028$ ).

### **How was the study conducted?**

- This was a prospective, randomised, placebo-controlled, double-blind study.
- 105 women with PMS were enrolled in the study: 49 were randomised to receive individualised homeopathic remedies and 56 to receive placebo. The results were analysed for 96 patients: 43 in the homeopathy group and 53 in the placebo group.
- As symptoms of PMS vary, different homeopathic medicines are needed for different individuals. The so-called “symptom cluster approach” was therefore used: women received one of 14 possible homeopathic prescriptions according to their symptoms, as identified via completion of a questionnaire.
- Only women whose symptoms matched the symptom profile of one of the 14 pre-selected homeopathic medicines were included.
- The Moos Modified Daily Menstrual Distress Questionnaire (MQD) was used as a daily diary, where women scored the severity of symptoms, use of conventional medication and number of sick days.
- Women were monitored for 2 menstrual cycles prior to treatment, then for three months during treatment.

### **How do the authors classify the results?**

The significant improvement of the premenstrual symptoms in women treated with homeopathy is an important finding of this study, with possible economical and sociological implications considering the high number of women who suffer from PMS. Also, the significant reduction in the use of conventional medication and in the number of sick days is an important and meaningful improvement in general quality of life for affected women.

### **What is the added value of the study?**

The symptom cluster approach tackles one of the major challenges in clinical research in homeopathy: finding a prescribing method which can be easily reproduced in future trials, yet also correctly tailors prescriptions to the symptoms of individual patients, as is required for this form of homeopathic treatment to be effective.

### **Where were the results published?**

Yakir M, Klein-Laansma CT, Kreitler S, Brzezinski A, Oberbaum M, Vithoukias G, Bentwich Z. A placebo-controlled double-blind randomized trial with individualized homeopathic treatment using a symptom cluster approach in women with premenstrual syndrome. Homeopathy 2019;108:256-269.

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