

## Review Article

### Homoeopathic concept of modalities: a systematic review

### Concepto homeopático de modalidades: una revisión sistemática

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#### ABSTRACT

**Background:** The homeopathic treatment system is based on comparing all the patient's symptoms with the symptomatology of the most similar remedy. Although it sounds simple, the art of devising a rational and complete set of symptoms of the sick individual is the hardest work for a homeopath. It is necessary for the homeopathic practitioner to direct his attention to the characteristics of the case. Modalities is that of the characteristic symptoms that helps to find the prescribing totality in case of illness. **Aim and Objective:** The aim of the present study is to review and comment on all available literature with objectives to subject each research paper to a critical analysis in order to shed light on the current topic and to find the way for new research. **Material and Methods:** Book literature and literature available on Databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, Medline and ScienceDirect in the form of research paper were searched and further analyzed. **Conclusion:** Modalities are one of the components of the complete symptom that individualizes the patient and remedies. Time-related modalities, whether general or specific, play a greater role in prescribing the similimum. Without the help of the modality, a longer search would have been necessary to find the similimum homeopathically. Depending on the modality, one can quickly prescribe medication. it is the easiest way to reach the similimum

**Keywords:** Modality, Symptomatology, Totality of Symptoms, Homeopathy.

#### RESUMEN

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### Introduction

Homeopathic medical science takes a holistic approach to the treatment of disease, the homeopathic medicines work dynamically and are administered in the potency and dose required to cure the disease in the shortest possible time (Anpat et al., 2019). In homeopathic treatment there is no remedy for the name of a disease, it is based on a law of nature, and the true homeopath must prescribe according to the law of nature also it does not have a specific name for any disease, but it does have a true specificity for each and every disease case (Das et al., 2020). While treating both acute and chronic cases the clinician should focus on the specifics of the case. The modalities are one of the characteristic symptoms that help to find the whole of the prescription in case of illness (Patil et al., [www.homoeopathy360.com](http://www.homoeopathy360.com), visited september 2021). Each symptom is characterized by factors that influence it. In most cases, the aggravating factor is identified first by the patient and the ameliorating factors are hardly noticed. To complete a symptom, both aggravating and ameliorating factors are very important (Tiwari, 2012). Patients are much more likely to report exacerbations because they are much more severe and cause discomfort to the patient, so they are very noticeable. Whereas ameliorating factors are only sought when the person's well-being is severely disturbed (Allen, 2018). Modalities help to conclude the indicated remedy; without the help of modality a longer search would have been required than the busy physician is able to make (Worcester, 1880). According to Dr. Boger, a cursory examination of a drug tested will reveal the common symptoms of all diseases, such as headaches, diarrhea, rashes, etc., but a somewhat closer examination of his sensation and relationships with the various parts of the body will reveal unmistakable differences in the form of their appearance, the modality. So, it goes without saying that we have to focus on that and specialize the modalities (Boger, 2018).

What is Modality

Dictionary meaning: According to Merriam Webster dictionary modality is -

- the quality or state of being modal.

- the classification of logical propositions according to their asserting or denying the possibility, impossibility, contingency, or necessity of their content (Merriam-Webster, 2011. Web. 8 may 2011).

According to Homeopathic point of view, "Modalities are natural circumstances or conditions which either aggravate or ameliorate the particular complaint or a person as a whole. It includes factors such as causing, exciting, increasing, decreasing or any other modifications of the symptoms" (Tiwari, 2012).

Origin of the concept

Dr. Hahnemann, in his Organon of medicine, under section 133, discusses that in experiencing a particular sensation it is necessary to determine its relation to positions, movements, walking in open air or closed room and various other factors in order to know the exact characteristic of these symptoms (Hahnemann, 2009).

Boenninghausen conducted an exhaustive study of all available homeopathic literature to arrive at a comprehensive complete case study. He accepted Hahnemann's opinion that in studying any disease, all changes in sensation and function should be noted in the most complete way possible. He stressed the need to complete symptoms in terms of location, sensation, and modalities, and suggested that completing each symptom would facilitate individualization<sup>[4]</sup>. He says, modalities have a much more important relationship to the totality of the case; a correct choice of the appropriate remedy very often depends mainly on them (Allen, 2018).

Types of Modalities

1. General Modality – factors which affect the patient as a whole. Ex. Feels better in open air.
2. Particular Modality – Limited to a particular part of the body. Ex. Headache relieved by tight bandaging.
3. Differential Modality – are those particular modalities which are exact opposite of general modalities found in a remedy. For example – in Arsenicum album headaches are relieved by cold and other symptoms are aggravated by cold.
4. Causative modality – are those which causes as well as aggravate the symptom.
5. Time modality – Symptoms that aggravate or ameliorate according to time comes under time modalities. Ex.

Worse at night

- I. Diurnal Modality – Symptoms aggravate or ameliorate over a period of day. Ex. Agg from sunrise to sunset
  - II. Fixed time modality – symptoms aggravate or ameliorate at particular time or a time period. Ex. Kali. carb - < 3 am, Lycopodium < 4-8 pm
6. Postural Modality – Aggravation or amelioration in reference to various positions like standing, sitting, stooping, lying down, etc.
  7. Meteorological Modality – Aggravation or amelioration of symptoms in relation to weather like dry weather, wet weather, cold weather, hot weather, change of weather, thunder storms, etc.
  8. Thermal Modality – effect of heat and cold application on particular part or in general.
  9. Conditional/Circumstantial Modality – Aggravation or amelioration of symptoms in relation to rest, motion (slow, rapid, first, continued), ascending or descending, turning, exertion, etc (Allen, 2018).

1.4 Significance of Modalities in Homeopathy

Modality will help to get a healing remedy instantly, if it is strong, persistent and peculiar.

Common symptoms are worthless for homeopathic prescribing unless qualified by modalities.

The symptom is often made peculiar or distinctive by its modality.

It characterizes the symptoms and add value to them.

These are very important in making the prescribing totality.

It helps in quick prescription in homeopathy.

It helps in individualization of the patient as well as the remedies.

#### AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the present study is to review and comment on all available literature with objectives to subject each research paper to a critical analysis in order to shed light on the current topic and to find the way for new research.

#### MATERIAL AND METHODS

##### Homoeopathic Literature

##### Organon of Medicine by Samuel Hahnemann

Dr. Hahnemann discusses modality in the organon of medicine, in section – 86 & 133 also in Foot notes of section 89 & 93.

Section 86: Dr. Hahnemann explains that it is the Physician's duty, when the patient has completed his or her history, to re-examine each symptom for the duration, previous treatment, exact location, sensations and circumstances (modality) it occurred, whether the particular symptom is getting worse or better.

Section 133 - It has been discussed that in experiencing a sensation it is necessary to determine the character of the symptoms in terms of positional modality, modality in relation to eating or drinking, circumstantial modality and time modality.

In the footnote to Section 89 - Master Hahnemann explains what kind of questions should be asked of the patient to complete a symptom.

In footnote to Section 93 - Dr. Hahnemann discusses the causative modality that can lie in the mental sphere in relation to various emotions such as unfortunate love, jealousy, worry, Grief due to misfortune, etc (Hahnemann, 2009).

##### Lectures on Homeopathic Philosophy by J. T. Kent

According to Dr. Kent -

The most important symptoms are modalities which relate to the whole person and their whole body or blood and fluids: such as sensitivity to heat, cold, storm, rest, night, day, time.

Often you will find that the modalities of each organ correspond to the general ones. However, sometimes there may be specific modalities of the organ that are contrary to the general ones (Differential modalities).

In his article, What the Doctor Needs to Know in order to make a Successful Prescription, Dr. Kent discusses about different types of modalities related to time, climate, posture and circumstances and how they help in individualization (Kent, 2011).

The Principles and Art of Cure by Homeopathy by H. A. Robert

According to H. A. Robert –

In analyzing the case, the very valuable symptoms are those pertaining to the aggravations and ameliorations, because the aggravations and ameliorations are the natural modifiers of the disease states and are the ultimate response of the man himself.

We should note that each note symptom has these deterioration and improvement modifier conditions i.e modalities (Robert, 2010).

The Genius of Homeopathy Lectures and essays on Homeopathic Philosophy by Dr. Stuart M. Close

Dr. S. Close in the chapter “ Examination of the Patient” states that –

When examining a patient. The student who knows the nature, constitution, general and particular modality, forms, and variety of symptoms necessary for a homoeopathic prescription will find much in a case which another, perhaps specially trained only in general pathology and diagnosis, will entirely overlook because pathology and diagnosis do not seek or consider the phenomena most relevant to the homeopathic prescriber.

The selection of the homeopathic remedy on the basis of modalities or characteristic conditions means little or nothing to the pathologist or general diagnostician but it is valuable to the homeopathic physician. The same applies to mental and subjective symptoms.

We must therefore separate and classify the different types of symptoms that emerge from a comprehensive general examination, and vary our methods of examination depending on the objective (Close, 2010).

Concept of Totality in Homoeopathy according to stalwarts

Boenninghausen’s Concept of Totality

He specifies seven points to understand the full picture of the disease –

*Quis* – Personality, the individuality

*Quid* – Disease, it’s nature and peculiarity

*Ubi* - Seat of the disease

*Quibus auxiliis* – Accompanying symptoms

*Cur* – Cause of the disease

*Quomodo* – Circumstantial modality

*Quando* – Time modality

Comment - The above seven maxims seem to contain all the essential aspects needed to get a complete picture of the disease. He emphasized completing each symptom with all of its components, including location, sensation, modalities, and concomitants. He says that the modalities have a much more important relationship to the whole of

the case; the right choice of the appropriate remedy very often depends to a large extent on characteristic modalities.

#### Kent's Concept of Totality

Kent's concept of totality is erected by following the hierarchy given below –

##### Mind:

Will – Anger, irritability, love, hate, fear, grief, anxiety, sadness, indifference, etc.

Perversion of Understanding – Illusion, delusion, hallucination, confusion, dullness, comprehension, etc.

Perversion of Memory – Absent minded, forgetful, mistakes in writing, speech, disorders of speech, etc.

##### Physical:

Symptoms pertaining to appetite, food, desires and aversions, and thirst.

Things affecting the entire body like – weather and temperature, food, positions and motions (Circumstantial modality)

Perversion of Sexual sphere including menstrual symptoms, general aggravation before, during and after menses, effects of coition, etc.

Symptoms of Special senses.

Particulars: Symptoms related to parts (characteristics)

Symptoms that cannot be explained

Symptoms with clear modalities

Comment - Common symptoms were given the least importance when selecting a drug, but when they are modality related or absent, they become important. Dr Kent has specified the importance of qualifying symptoms on the mental (qualified mental) and physical levels. According to him, the symptoms become more important when they are also relativized by modalities.

#### Boger's Concept of Totality

In fact, Boger helped the profession by bringing all of his experience to the development of Portrait of Illness. He again emphasized the following seven points to get the full picture of the disease:

Changes of personality and temperament

Peculiarities of the disease

The seat of the disease

Concomitants

The cause (Causative modalities)

Modalities (Circumstantial modalities)

Time (Time modalities)

Comment - It is evident that Boger preferred to understand the whole phenomenon at the level of constitution, diagnosis and ongoing pathology. Boger's appreciation of the time dimension, causative modalities, tissue affinities,

and general pathology provided a new perspective for understanding the case. He favored modalities, particularly time and causative modalities in the similimum selection process (Tiwari, 2018).

#### HOMEOPATHIC REPERTORIES

A Systematic Alphabetic Repertory of Homeopathic Remedies

1<sup>st</sup> published repertory

Well organized, systematic and had clarity in presentation.

Has 49 sections and each section is followed by particular modalities

All the particular sections are followed by generalities, time modalities (general), general aggravation and general ameliorations (Boenninghausen, 1832).

Therapeutic Pocket Book for Homeopathic Physicians, to Use at the Bedside and in the Study of the Materia Medica

There are seven sections in BTPB –

Mind and Intellect

Parts of the body and organ

Sensation and Complaints

Sleep and Dreams

Fever

Alterations of the state of health

Relationship of Remedies

Dr. Boenninghausen has gave a separate section on modalities, in which he elaborated aggravation according to time (Time modalities)

Aggravations according to situations and circumstances (Situational and circumstantial modality)

Ameliorations according to situations and circumstances

In this section the time aggravation comes first and then alphabetically, those aggravations according to “situation and circumstances”.

The section aggravation covers a number of conditions, while the section devoted to Ameliorations is comparatively small (Allen, 2018).

Repertory of the Homeopathic Materia Medica by J. T. Kent

In Kent’s repertory there is no particular section which is devoted to the modalities. But modalities have given place in all the sections.

General modalities in relation to mental sphere has been given Mind section and General modalities in relation to physical sphere has been given in Generalities Section.

Particular modalities have been given in the sections devoted to the particular part, location or organ.

Kent has given the importance of Qualified mental which are nothing but are those symptoms which are qualified by Modalities.

In Rubric arrangement time modality has been given the second place.

Causative modality is described in generality section of Kent repertory, these causative modalities help to find out characteristic totality or prescribing totality of case of disease in a shortest period of time.

The consideration of causative modalities described generality section of Kent repertory plays vital role towards the correct analysis of any case of a disease. The utility of Kent repertory with regards to causative modality is great while treating cases of variety of diseases.(Kent 2012)

Boger Boenninghausen's Characteristics and Repertory by C. M. Boger

There is total 53 sections in this repertory

Every section is enriched with sub-sections of Time, Aggravation and amelioration.

Last two sections are devoted to Time modalities and Circumstantial Modalities in general.

This way of presentation shows that Boger favored modalities, particularly time and causative modalities in the similitum selection process (Boger, 2018).

Repertory to the Modalities, in their relation to Temperature, Air, Water, Winds, Weather, and Seasons by Samuel Worcester, MD

This repertory is mainly based on Hering's Condensed Materia Medica with additions from Allen, Lippe, and Hale.

There is total 15 sections devoted to various kinds of modalities

Different sections are as follows -

The Sun, effect of its heat and light

External Heat or Warmth

Becoming warm

Effects of cold in general

Cold applications

Food and Drink

Being covered, uncovered, and undressed

Becoming warm in bed

In room and entering room

Effects of open air

The weather

Water

The seasons

New or full moon

Effects of thunderstorm. (Worcester, 1880)

A Synoptic Key of the Materia Medica by C. M. Boger

This book is divided into 2 parts

Analysis Part

## Synopsis Part

The Analysis part of this book is a repertory which constructed for the analysis of symptom complexes.

This repertory is structured into –

Times of aggravation (Time modality)

Conditions of Aggravations and Ameliorations (Circumstantial modality)

Generalities

Regional Repertory

The 1<sup>st</sup> section of this repertory is devoted to time modalities with general rubrics as – Periodically, Morning, Afternoon, Evening and Night.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> section all the other modalities in relation to circumstances, posture, weather, thermal, Eating or drinking, Emotions have been given (Boger 2010).

Boericke's New Manual of Homeopathic Materia Medica with Repertory

There is total 24 sections in this repertory out of which 1 section is devoted to the Modalities: Aggravations and Ameliorations.

In this section Aggravations in general has been given in alphabetical order followed by Ameliorations in the same manner.

All the general modalities are given Modalities section.

In remaining sections rubrics are arranged in alphabetical order and each rubric when extensive in scope is presented as follows –

Cause

Type

Location

Character

Concomitants

Modalities – Aggravations and Ameliorations (Boericke, 2010).

Synthetic Repertory by Barthel and Klunker

This repertory is divided into three volumes according to the hierarchy of symptoms –

Volume I include Mental General

Volume II include Physical General (excluding sex and sleep)

Volume III includes Sleep, Dreams, Sex

In the 1<sup>st</sup> volume - main rubrics are followed by subrubrics like – Time and various modality including different concomitants and Ailments from is given as separate rubrics, which contains various causative factors.

In 2<sup>nd</sup> volume – main rubric starts with the time modality and the fraction of time is mentioned as par progress of time like daytime, morning, forenoon, etc.

In 3<sup>rd</sup> volume – time and circumstantial modality in alphabetical order follow the main rubrics wherever applicable (Barthel et al, 1992).

Synthesis 9.1 by Dr. Frederik Schroyens

There is total 38 chapters in this repertory.

Each chapter follows rubric arrangement of –

Sides

Times

Modalities

Extension

Localization

Descriptions

In synthesis 9.1 rubrics containing the same modality are positioned next to each other which increases the number of remedy choices for thousands of modalities (Combined modality).

All the modalities related to weather are found under the chapter Generals having main rubric as “Weather”.

Wherever applicable modalities are reduced to either agg or amel (Schroyens, 2018).

#### Previous Research Papers

According to Dr. Kanjilal, the selection of the similimum can be based on the following factors: patient symptomatology, causal factor, miasmatic history, maintenance of the cause, constitutional prescription, pathological prescription, and temporal sequence of the symptom. Selection of the similimum based on modalities is one of those that falls under the prescription of the similimum based on the patient's symptoms (Kanjilal, 1974).

Dr. Chakravorty discussed the importance of the ameliorating factor in similimum selection. To give a solid base to his article he has taken opinion of many experienced homeopaths like Dr. Jugal Kishore, Dr. P. Shankaran and Dr. S. R. Phatak and published his article on rubrics of amelioration. He has explained it by giving example of Dr. P. Shankaran's case, in which the person was aggravated whenever he went away from home, Dr. Shankaran had taken this symptom as agg by suppressed sexual desire, but he failed to cure this patient while another physician who has given importance to ameliorating factor which was amelioration from natural discharges, and the patient was cured with Lachesis (Chakravorty, 2008).

Munjal Thakar, has attempted to restore Boenninghausen's philosophy of complete symptom, the concept of totality and its practical approach and relationship to Boger's philosophy. In the first part, Munjal Thakkar discusses Boenninghausen's concept of totality. According to Boenninghausen, a complete symptom is the one that has location, sensation, modalities, and concomitants. Furthermore, she analyzes the original cases of Dr. Boenninghausen to find a specific pattern to understand the concept of Boenninghausen. In the second she mentions that Dr. Boger who was a follower of Dr. Boenninghausen has gone through his literary work and found the criticism on the part of Boenninghausen's concept of grand generalisation and simplified this concept in his

work named Boger Boenninghausen's Characteristics and Repertory. In order to understand Boger's philosophy, the author reviewed his original cases (Thakar, 2012).

According to Dr. Ashok V. Anpat and Dr. Viprav Kavishwar, when treating a case, the physician should focus on finding the symptoms of PQRS i.e., the most characteristic. The modalities are one of the factors that form the characteristic symptoms and help in analyzing cases and finding the similimum (Anpat et al., 2019).

Dr. Asma Munir Sheikh in her article describes the modalities as the signs that the patient says to the physician during case taking and highlights the importance of temporal modalities in homeopathic prescribing ( Sheikh, 2019).

According to Dr. Biplob Kumar Das and Dr. Ajoy Kumar Mondal, in order to prescribe a medicine homeopathically, we must first analyze the totality of the patient's symptoms and then determine their similarity to the symptoms of the medicine. This is not an easy task, totality is not simply the sum of the patient's symptoms, but it is the logical and systematic arrangement of the symptoms to paint a picture of the person in the ill state. Modalities play a very important role in crafting this totality (Das et al., 2020).

Dr. Suvarna Patil and Dr. Supriya Korde, in their article describes modality as the factor under which a particular symptom occurs. In order to find the similimum quickly, a physician must perceive the characteristic symptoms of the disease in both acute and chronic cases, and the modalities are the factor that helps the physician to find the similimum among many similar ones. Among all modalities, the time modality points to the clearly defined remedy (Patil et al., [www.homoeopathy360.com](http://www.homoeopathy360.com), visited september 2021 ).

In a review article by Dr. Pratima Mandal and Dr. Soumyabrata Dogra, they discuss the practical use of the book "A manual of Homoeo-therapeutics an introduction to the study and practice of homoeopathy by Edwin A Neatby & Thomas George Stonham". The author's intention in writing this review article was to draw the reader's attention to ameliorating factor. They suggest the reader that, when prescribing a remedy homeopathically, give importance to the ameliorating factors of a symptom (Mandal et al., 2020).

Dr. Abhijeet Chatterjee organized the time mode in the form of a clock according to each hour of the day and called it the BBM clock. So that it can be easy for a doctor to select the similimum. According to him, there are many approaches to finding the similimum in our daily practice. Each drug has a different modality and we can differentiate the remedies based on the modalities (Chatterjee, 2021).

According to Dr. Ashmita Amar Gajare, when working on acute and chronic cases, priority and importance should be given to characteristic or case-specific symptoms and time modalities also belong these categories which helps to get closer to the prescribing (Gajre et al., 2020).

According to Dr. Disha Rao k one can quickly prescribe the drug on the basis modality. Among the different approaches, this is the easiest way to reach the similimum. He has described different types of modalities depending on the time, season and climate, movement, thermal reactions, eating and drinking various foods, the effect of external impressions and the influence of psychological factors. She has described 3 cases; One is of allergic rhinitis, second of Meniere's disease and third of fever of unknown origin and came to the conclusion that

the modalities help to select the similimum in the most reliable and shortest way (Rao, 2021, Homeobook.com, visited october 2021).

#### DISCUSSION

Homeopathy is a branch of medical science based on the Law of Similia. We believe that a substance which, in its crude form, can cause disease in a healthy person also has the power to cure that disease in a sick person. We prescribe our medicines based on the similarity of the symptoms, a physician with his knowledge and experience establishes the similarity between the natural disease and the drug disease and selects the similimum, in this way we individualize the cases. Modalities are one of the components of the complete symptom that individualizes the patient as well as medicines. These are the natural circumstances or conditions that alter the symptom in two ways: they either increase the intensity of the symptom or decrease it. Without the help of the modality, it would have taken a longer search to find the similimum homeopathically. These studies found that similimum selection can be based on many approaches and modality-based similimum selection is one of them. When selecting the similimum, the ameliorating factor was emphasized more than the aggravating factors. The modalities related to time, whether general or specific, play a more important role in the prescription of the similimum. One can quickly prescribe the medicines depending on the modality, it is the easiest way to reach the similimum.

#### CONCLUSION

Modalities are the integral part of homeopathic prescribing which characterizes a symptom and make it more valuable while selecting the similimum. It represent the individuality of the patient and helps in making prescribing totality of a case for selection of remedy homeopathically

All stalwarts of homeopathy have given prime importance to modalities to while analyzing the case and making selection of a remedy for a case.

In all previous articles, the authors discuss about the importance of modalities in selecting the similimum in clinical practice. These are the natural circumstances which modifies the intensity of the symptoms. These form one of the components of the complete symptoms. The modalities help in individualization of the patient, and the remedies.

There are different types of modalities, but causative modalities and temporal modalities are the most important of all. These characterize a symptom and make it more valuable among all other symptoms.

Most of the available articles are review articles that provide a theoretical basis for the study. Although modality-based prescribing is very popular with all physicians, clinical studies on the subject are still lacking.

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