

# Homoeopathic Treatment for Diabetic Foot Ulcer- A Case Report

# Chittaranjan Kundu <sup>1\*</sup>Arti Soren<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Officer (Homoeopathy), Scientist: I, <sup>2</sup>Research Officer (Homoeopathy), Scientist: III, Dr. Anjali Chatterjee Regional Research Institute for Homoeopathy, Kolkata, WB, India

## **ABSTRACT:**

A 70-year-old male patient suffered from a diabetic foot ulcer characterized by swelling, sensitivity, itching, and persistent burning sensation. Treatment consisted of homoeopathic medicines, including Belladonna 6 and 30 for acute symptoms and Arsenicum album 30 for ulcerative lesions and burning pain. External care with Calendula ointment was applied to promote wound healing. The patient exhibited progressive healing with pink granulation tissue formation and reduced swelling and redness; additional prescriptions of Belladonna 30, Arsenicum album 30, Catharis 30, and Cantharis 30 to address the remaining symptoms. They also ensured the patient continued using Calendula ointment regularly. This case demonstrates the successful management of a diabetic foot ulcer using homoeopathic remedies and highlights the importance of individualized treatment. Utilizing Wagner Grades with Monarch, Radar 10 software enhances the supporting evidence.

KEYWORDS: Diabetic foot ulcer, Homeopathic treatment, MONARCH, Radar 10, Wagner Grades.

\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Chittaranjan Kundu

Research Officer (Homoeopathy), Scientist: I

Dr. Anjali Chatterjee Regional Research Institute for

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

Diabetes can profoundly affect foot health, including reduced blood flow, nerve damage, and impaired wound healing. If not properly managed, these factors increase the risk of foot complications, ulcers, and potentially severe infections or gangrene.

Diabetic foot ulcers (DFU) are a common reason for hospital admissions among the Indian population, posing significant financial and medical burdens on patients and their families. Many diabetic foot ulcer patients

Homoeopathy, Kolkata, WB, India E-mail : dr.kundu1984@gmail.com rely on caregivers for their daily activities. th, Leg amputation, a frequent complication of ge, diabetic foot ulcers, can result in permanent rly disability for many individuals. Unpleasant of odours, excessive discharge, pain, and limited mobility often accompany diabetic ulcers. These conditions necessitate daily dressing

These conditions necessitate daily dressing changes, antibiotic therapy (including intravenous administration), and other medications. Such treatments can adversely affect the patient's physical health, daily functioning, socioeconomic status, financial



well-being, and psychosocial well-being, ultimately impacting their overall quality of life.<sup>1,2</sup> Patients with diabetes and ulcers generally experience a poorer quality of life than those with diabetes alone<sup>3</sup>.

In India, with approximately 463 million adults worldwide living with diabetes, India ranks second, following China, with 77 million patients. The prevalence of diabetes mellitus is 8.8% among individuals aged 20-79<sup>4</sup>. Diabetic foot disease poses a significant challenge to healthcare systems and providers globally<sup>5</sup>. Individuals with diabetes face a lifetime risk of developing a foot ulcer as high as 25%, making it the leading cause of hospitalization among diabetic patients, accounting for approximately 30% of admissions<sup>6</sup>. In addition, the treatment of diabetic foot ulcers incurs substantial expenses, constituting approximately 20% of the total healthcare costs associated with diabetes. This financial burden surpasses the costs associated with any other complication related to diabetes. Managing diabetic foot ulcers requires significant healthcare resources and interventions, emphasizing the need for effective preventive measures and early intervention strategies to reduce the economic impact on individuals and healthcare systems alike6. Diabetic foot complications have emerged as a significant concern, resulting in high hospitalisation rates and disability<sup>7</sup>. The incidence of diabetic foot patients is rising in urban and rural India, with 85% of amputations following foot ulcers. Preventable secondary infections accompany 75% of these amputations, primarily affecting neuropathic feet. In India, neuropathic lesions contribute 80% of foot ulcers, while neuro ischemic ulcers account for the remaining 20%<sup>8</sup>.

Whereas Wagner Grades are a classification system used to categorize the severity of diabetic foot ulcers. These grades range from 0 to 5 and help healthcare professionals assess the extent of tissue involvement and the risk of complications in diabetic patients with foot ulcers:

- Grade 0: No open ulcer, but there might be pre-ulcerative lesions or deformities.
- Grade 1: Superficial ulcer involving the full skin thickness.
- Grade 2: Deep ulcer with involvement of ligaments and deeper structures.
- Grade 3: Deep ulcer with cellulitis or abscess formation.
- Grade 4: Gangrene limited to portions of the foot.
- Grade 5: Extensive gangrene necessitating foot amputation.

These grades aid treatment decisions and prognosis estimation for diabetic individuals with foot ulcers<sup>9,10</sup>.

While conventional medical interventions play a vital role in managing diabetic foot disorders, there is growing interest in complementary and alternative therapies, such as homoeopathy. Boericke's Materia Medica covers remedies for ulcers like Anthracinum, Arsenicum album. Carbo animalis, Lachesis, Muriatic acid, and Tarentula-C. The Kent repertory includes additional effective ulcer remedies like Calcarea-Sulph, Kali-Sulph, and Merc-sol. The case series<sup>11</sup> highlighted the prevention of amputations using homoeopathy, particularly in type II DM cases. Kali-Bichromicum 200 successfully treated a case of diabetic foot ulcer (DFU).12

A meta-analysis of 10 studies<sup>13</sup> indicated that gram-negative bacteria were the leading cause of diabetic foot ulcers (DFUs). Diabetic retinopathy (DR) and albuminuria (Alb)



significantly increased the risk of DFU development<sup>14</sup>. A 12-month prospective observational study confirmed that limb ischemia, longer ulcer duration, and multiple ulcers negatively affected the prognosis of infected DFUs<sup>15</sup>. While a systematic review<sup>16</sup> found short-term improvement in ulcers with hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT), its longterm efficacy still needs to be more conclusive. Stem cell therapy<sup>17</sup> has shown effectiveness as an alternative to amputation for patients without revascularisation options. Ceratothoaoestroides extract ointment demonstrated efficacy in a single case<sup>18</sup>, and collagen implant dressings with gentamicin sulphate showed favourable outcomes in a neuro ischaemic DFU case report<sup>19</sup>. Guideline recommendations<sup>20</sup> help healthcare professional's that select appropriate footwear for individuals with diabetes. Individualized homoeopathic treatment, as observed in a retrospective cohort study<sup>21</sup> and а prospective observational study<sup>22</sup>, improved glycaemic control and DFU outcomes.

#### **CASE REPORT:**

The patient is a 70-year-old male with a height of 170cm and a weight of 55kg. His blood pressure (B.P) is recorded at 122/82 mmHg. He presents with a chief complaint of an ulcerative lesion on the right foot's posterior aspect, precisely above the heel in the calcaneal region. This lesion has been present for the last month.

Symptoms associated with the ulcer include swelling, the area's paleness, and a severe burning sensation, notably alleviated when the patient washes the area with warm water. Regarding his medical history, the patient has undergone a right-sided inguinal hernia operation. His history reveals that he works as a shopkeeper, follows a non-vegetarian diet, and smokes 2-3 cigarettes daily. On a general note, the patient is described as lean and emaciated. He is not hypertensive but has a known diagnosis of diabetes. Mentally, the patient is characterized as restless by nature and experiences disturbed sleep, primarily due to the intense burning pain in the affected foot, which tends to worsen at night.

#### Analysis of Symptoms:

Specific disease-related symptoms were highlighted after evaluating the symptoms and analyzing the case (Table 01). The patient was diagnosed with a psoric predominant state—a repertorial analysis using Kent's method. The Kent Repertory has been used for over a century and has stood the test of time, earning the trust of many homoeopaths. Kent's repertory is based on his extensive clinical experience and observations, making it a valuable tool for homoeopaths. Overall, the Kent Repertory is a valuable resource for homoeopaths as it aids in the precise selection of remedies based on a patient's unique symptoms, contributing to the practice of individualized and holistic Radar-10 healing and software Table:1(Figure -6) was performed to gain further insight into the patient's condition [Kent J. English Kent].

## Silicea:17/40, Ars.Alb: 17/34, Belladonna:16/46, Mercurius: 16/40, Sulphur: 16/36

While the repertorial table may have ranked *Silicea* as the first choice with the highest score, I chose Ars album as the remedy for this patient. Focusing on physical symptoms primarily drove my decision, but one particular mental symptom carried significant weight in my decision-making process. The



patient's restlessness stood out prominently, and it played a decisive role in leading me to select Ars album as the most appropriate medicine

## Table-1: Reportorial analysis:

Repertories	7	🗗 📩 🥐 😰 🕢 📲 🔠 Views: Full reperts	tory	Search remedy:	• •
Nepertories       ∧         > ■       ■		<ul> <li>1. Clipboard 1</li> <li>1. SKIN - ULCERS - discharges - scanty</li> <li>2. SKIN - ULCERS - painful</li> <li>3. SKIN - SENSITIVENESS</li> <li>4. SKIN - SWELLING - safected parts, on of</li> <li>5. SKIN - ULCERS (</li> </ul>	17	3. 5. well ref i jur jur we we we we	<sup>6</sup> <sup>1</sup> <sup>1</sup> <sup>10</sup> <sup>13</sup> <sup>14</sup> <sup>15</sup> <sup>16</sup> <sup>16</sup> <sup>16</sup> <sup>16</sup> <sup>16</sup> <sup>16</sup> <sup>16</sup> <sup>16</sup>
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48 document(s) loaded (48 volumes)			<		> ~
< >		7 symptom(s) / 156 remedies Sum of symptoms (sorte	ed degrees)	No limitation	All remedies

# Table 2: Time line and Follow-ups:

06/10/22	Fig.: 01	Belladonna 6/2 doses were
First visit	On examination - Size: 35mm x 30 mm,	administered stat (morning and evening) on
	Shape: liver shaped, Depth: 2.5 mm,	the day of the visit. Belladonna was chosen
	Margin: well-defined, Floor: whitish,	based on:
	yellowish in colour, Discharge: sticky	swollen,
	discharge,	Sensitive skin with a hot feeling.
	Wagner Grades: 1;	Throbbing conditions.
		Following Belladonna, the treatment plan
		continued as follows:
		$\succ$ Arsenicum album 30/6 doses in sac.lac.
		Twice daily for three days.
		Dry, itching ulcers
		Burning pain that worsens at night.
		Relieves warm application and has a
		specific affinity for skin conditions.
		$\succ$ The patient was instructed to clean and
		dress the lesion daily with boiled water and
		apply Calendula ointment twice a day for
		seven days. Calendula's antiseptic properties
		promote wound healing and reduce
		inflammation.
13/10/22	During the follow-up visit, the	The swelling and pale and redness of the foot
1 <sup>st</sup>	patient's condition showed	had increased significantly.
Follow-	improvement, but swelling increased.	Belladonna 30/10 doses, twice daily for five



		1
up	The formation of pink-yellowish	days.
	granulation tissue in the ulcer	Arsenicum album $30/\frac{1}{2}$ drum, twice daily for
	indicated a positive healing response.	five days.
	Although the burning sensation had	Calendula ointment, external use twice daily
	slightly improved, it persisted to	for 20 days. Calendula has antiseptic
	some extent. However, the swelling	properties and aids in wound healing and
	and redness of the foot had	reducing inflammation.
	significantly increased.	The rationale behind this prescription was to
	Fig.: 02	address the persistent burning sensation,
		further promote healing, and support the
	Fasting Blood Sugar:108/mg/dl	overall improvement in the patient's
	Postprandial Blood Sugar: 152mg/dl	condition. Combining the selected remedies
		with the application of Calendula ointment
	Fig:02-A	aimed to provide comprehensive treatment
		and enhance the healing process of the
	Advice for the diabetic diet.	ulcerative lesion.
	On examination - Size: 42mm x 32	
	mm, Shape: liver shaped, Depth:	
	3.0mm, Margin: well-defined, Floor:	
	pinkish, yellowish in colour,	
	Discharge: sticky discharge	
	Wagner Grades: 02	
31/10/22	The patient presented with symptoms	<i>Cantharis 30/ ½ drum, three</i> globules twice
2 <sup>nd</sup>	of burning during urination, constant	daily for seven days.
Follow-	urge to urinate, and eruption on the	Calendula ointment, external use only before
up	skin characterized by mealy scales.	bedtime at night.
	Additionally, there was a mild	
	burning sensation.	
	Fig.: 03	
40/44/02	Wagner Grades: 01	
10/11/22	3 <sup>rd</sup> Follow-up	<i>Belladonna30/ 1</i> /2 drum, Four Globules Twice a
3 <sup>rd</sup>	The patient exhibited progressive	<i>Belladonna30/ 1</i> /2 drum, Four Globules Twice a day for five days.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Follow-	The patient exhibited progressive healing of the ulcerative lesion during	
3 <sup>rd</sup>	The patient exhibited progressive healing of the ulcerative lesion during the subsequent visits. However, the	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Follow-	The patient exhibited progressive healing of the ulcerative lesion during the subsequent visits. However, the patient reported experiencing	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Follow-	The patient exhibited progressive healing of the ulcerative lesion during the subsequent visits. However, the patient reported experiencing throbbing pain in the affected area. To	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Follow-	The patient exhibited progressive healing of the ulcerative lesion during the subsequent visits. However, the patient reported experiencing throbbing pain in the affected area. To address this symptom.	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Follow-	The patient exhibited progressive healing of the ulcerative lesion during the subsequent visits. However, the patient reported experiencing throbbing pain in the affected area. To address this symptom. <i>Fig.: 04</i>	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Follow- up	The patient exhibited progressive healing of the ulcerative lesion during the subsequent visits. However, the patient reported experiencing throbbing pain in the affected area. To address this symptom. <i>Fig.: 04</i> Wagner Grades: 00	day for five days.
3 <sup>rd</sup> Follow- up 01/12/22	The patient exhibited progressive healing of the ulcerative lesion during the subsequent visits. However, the patient reported experiencing throbbing pain in the affected area. To address this symptom. <i>Fig.: 04</i> <b>Wagner Grades: 00</b> During the subsequent visits, the	day for five days. <i>Placebo</i> 30/ 1 drum, three globules, Once daily
3 <sup>rd</sup> Follow- up	The patient exhibited progressive healing of the ulcerative lesion during the subsequent visits. However, the patient reported experiencing throbbing pain in the affected area. To address this symptom. <i>Fig.: 04</i> Wagner Grades: 00	day for five days.



up	Wagner Grades: 00
	No ulcer found
	Fig.: 05

## Table:03 Assessment according to MONARCH: <u>MODIFIED NARANJO CRITERIA</u>

Modified Naranjo criteria	Yes	No	Not sure or N/A
Was there an improvement in the primary symptom or condition for which the homoeopathic medicine was prescribed?	+2		
Did the clinical improvement occur within a plausible timeframe relative to the drug intake?	+1		
Was there an initial aggravation of symptoms?	+1		
Did the effect encompass more than the main symptom or condition (i.e. were other symptoms ultimately improved or changed)?	+1		
Did overall wellbeing improve?	+1		
(A) Direction of cure: did some symptoms improve in the opposite order of the development of symptoms of the disease?			Not sure
(B) Direction of cure: did at least two of the following aspects apply to the order of improvement of symptoms: From organs of more importance to those of less importance from deeper to more superficial aspects of the individual from the top downwards			Not sure
Did "old symptoms" (defined as non-seasonal and non-cyclical symptoms that were previously thought to have resolved) reappear temporarily during the course of improvement?			Not sure
Are there alternate causes (other than the medicine) that – with a high probability- could have caused the improvement? (Consider known course of disease, other forms of treatment, and other clinically relevant interventions)		+1	
Was the health improvement confirmed by any objective evidence? (e.g. lab test, clinical observation, etc.)	+2		
Did repeat dosing, if conducted, create similar clinical improvement?			Not sure
Total score Maximum score = 13 Minimum score = -3	+8	+1	



#### Table 04 Assessment according to Quality of Life

## EQ-5D-5L (UK English sample version)

Under each heading, please tick the ONE box that best describes your health TODAY

#### MOBILITY

I have no problems in walking about
I have slight problems in walking about
I have moderate problems in walking about
I have severe problems in walking about
I am unable to walk about

#### SELF-CARE

I have no problems washing or dressing myself
I have slight problems washing or dressing myself
I have moderate problems washing or dressing myself
I have severe problems washing or dressing myself
I am unable to wash or dress myself

USUAL ACTIVITIES (e.g. work, study, housework, family or leisure activities)

I have no problems doing my usual activities
I have slight problems doing my usual activities
I have moderate problems doing my usual activities
I have severe problems doing my usual activities
I am unable to do my usual activities

#### **PAIN / DISCOMFORT**

I have no pain or discomfort
I have slight pain or discomfort
I have moderate pain or discomfort
I have severe pain or discomfort
I have extreme pain or discomfort

#### **ANXIETY / DEPRESSION**

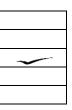
I am not anxious or depressed I am slightly anxious or depressed I am moderately anxious or depressed I am severely anxious or depressed I am extremely anxious or depressed

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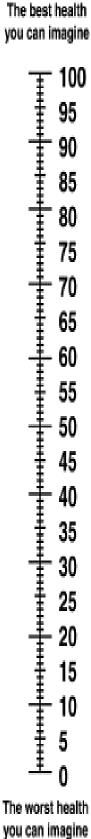


We would like to know how good or bad your health is TODAY.

- This scale is numbered from 0 to 100.
- 100 means the best health you can imagine. 0 means the worst health you can imagine.
- Mark an X on the scale to indicate how your health is TODAY.
- Now, please write the number you marked on the scale in the box below

YOUR SCORE TODAY







#### Table 05 Assessment according to Quality of Life

## EQ-5D-5L (UK English sample version)

Under each heading, please tick the ONE box that best describes your health TODAY.

#### MOBILITY

I have no problems in walking about
I have slight problems in walking about
I have moderate problems in walking about
I have severe problems in walking about
I am unable to walk about

#### SELF-CARE

I have no problems washing or dressing myself
I have slight problems washing or dressing myself
I have moderate problems washing or dressing myself
I have severe problems washing or dressing myself
I am unable to wash or dress myself

USUAL ACTIVITIES (e.g. work, study, housework, family or leisure activities)

I have no problems doing my usual activities
I have slight problems doing my usual activities
I have moderate problems doing my usual activities
I have severe problems doing my usual activities
I am unable to do my usual activities

#### **PAIN / DISCOMFORT**

I have no pain or discomfort
I have slight pain or discomfort
I have moderate pain or discomfort
I have severe pain or discomfort
I have extreme pain or discomfort

#### **ANXIETY / DEPRESSION**

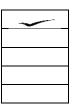
I am not anxious or depressed I am slightly anxious or depressed I am moderately anxious or depressed I am severely anxious or depressed I am extremely anxious or depressed

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- We would like to know how good or bad your health is TODAY.
- This scale is numbered from 0 to 100.
- 100 means the best health you can imagine. 0 means the worst health you can imagine.
- Mark an X on the scale to indicate how your health is TODAY.
- Now, please write the number you marked on the scale in the box below

YOUR SCORE TODAY



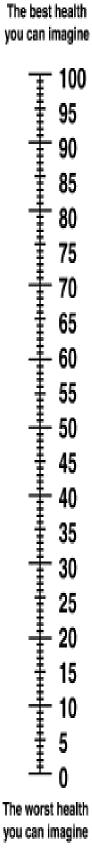
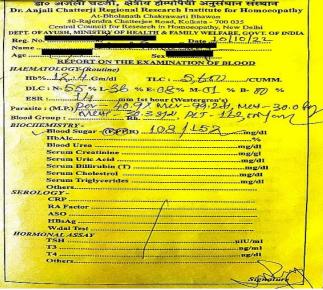








Fig-2: 13/10/22 1st Follow-up



**Fig-3-A Pathology report** 



Fig-4: 31/10/22 2nd Follow-up





Fig-5 10/11/22 3<sup>rd</sup> Follow-up

#### **DISCUSSION:**

In this case, the assessment utilized the Wagner system and the blood biochemistry report, along with MONARCH, with consistent photographs taken from the same angle and with consistent light exposure. However, it should be noted that photographic evidence has limitations in terms of diagnostic accuracy, which is one of the drawbacks of the case report. The study also incorporated the quality-of-life scale (EQ-5D-EL) as an additional outcome measurement tool to supplement the findings.

In this case, the total MONARCH score (Table: 03) was 09 after 55 days of treatment. A score of 09 indicates a 'definite' association between homoeopathic medicine and the observed outcome. To provide some context, here are the score ranges and their corresponding interpretations<sup>23</sup>:

- Definite: Total score  $\geq 9$
- Probable: Total score 5-8
- Possible: Total score 1-4
- Doubtful: Total score  $\leq 0$

Since the total score was 09, it suggests a strong and definite association between



Fig-6:01/12/22 4th Follow-up

homoeopathic medicine and the observed outcome in this case.

Significantly, the quality-of-life scale (Tables 04 and 05) provided valuable insights into the patient's improvement after one month. Notably, the patient visited the outpatient department without knowing their diabetic and received no antidiabetic status medication. At our hospital, postprandial plasma glucose levels were obtained and assessed, providing crucial information for evaluation. Although subsequent blood glucose measurements were not performed, the ulcer gradually healed. It progressed from Grade 1 to Grade 2 and ultimately reached Grade 0 according to the Wagner system, indicating complete healing.

Regarding the treatment approach, the use of Belladonna was emphasised due to its beneficial effects on the skin condition of cellulitis, mainly characterised by swelling. Belladonna is known to have a notable impact on the vascular system of the skin, leading to symptoms such as throbbing and burning pain—the initial prescription aimed to address the throbbing pain, a characteristic symptom associated with *Belladonna*.



On the other hand, Arsenicum Album played a significant role in this particular case. It is known for its profound effects on various organs. In the context of the patient's condition, Arsenicum Album was prescribed to alleviate restlessness caused by the burning pain in the ulcer, particularly pronounced at night. The patient experienced relief through the application of hot treatments.

Apart from this case report, we also found two cases of diabetic foot ulcers successfully treated using homoeopathic medicines, *Lachesis mutus* and *Calendula officinalis Q*, in conjunction with standard care at an inpatient department<sup>24</sup>. Homeopathy significantly treats chronic leg ulcers, particularly those associated with diabetes and varicose veins. <sup>25</sup>A detailed review of case reports showed that *Silicea, Sulphur, Lachesis, Sepia*, and *Medorrhinum* were the primary drugs used in the treatment of diabetic foot ulcers (DFU) <sup>11,26,27</sup>

Combining the Wagner system assessment, blood biochemistry report, photographic and the quality-of-life scale evidence. provided comprehensive insights into the patient's progress and treatment outcomes. While acknowledging the limitations of photographic evidence and the need for further measurements, the study demonstrated a positive trend toward healing and improvement in the patient's condition. The tailored prescriptions of the Belladonna and Arsenicum Album addressed specific symptoms and contributed to the overall management of the case.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

This case highlights homoeopathic medicines' effectiveness in managing diabetic foot ulcers. Considering the patient's specific symptoms and characteristics, combining internal remedies and external wound care demonstrated a comprehensive approach to promote healing, reduce inflammation, and alleviate symptoms.

#### Limitation of the study:

To scientifically validate this intervention, further trials involving more cases are necessary for this single case study.

#### **Patients consent:**

Before and after treatment, the patient consented to publish images while ensuring their identity remains undisclosed.

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