



Research Article

Psychosocial Stressors, Gut–Skin Axis and Acne Vulgaris: Understanding Constitutional Remedy Selection in Homoeopathic Practice

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Abstract

Background: Acne vulgaris is increasingly recognised as a condition influenced by psychosocial stress and dysregulation of the gut–skin axis. Emotional stress alters gut microbiota composition and neuro-endocrine immune responses, contributing to inflammatory acne. Homoeopathy, with its emphasis on mental state, individuality, and constitutional makeup, may offer therapeutic benefit by addressing psychophysiological contributors.

Objective: To explore the interconnected roles of psychosocial stressors and gut–skin axis dysregulation in acne vulgaris, and to discuss how constitutional Homoeopathic remedy selection aligns with these mechanisms.

Method: A narrative literature review was conducted using publications from dermatology, psychoneuroimmunology, gastroenterology, and Homoeopathic clinical literature (2010–2024). Theoretical synthesis was carried out linking stress response, intestinal dysbiosis, and inflammatory acne expression to individualised remedy selection principles.

Results: Evidence suggests that chronic psychological stress impacts intestinal permeability and systemic inflammation, leading to acne exacerbation. Homoeopathic case analysis that integrates personality structure, stress triggers, coping mechanisms, and gastrointestinal symptoms enhances constitutional remedy accuracy. Key constitutional remedies, including *Pulsatilla*, *Natrum muriaticum*, *Lycopodium*, *Sulphur*, and *Ignatia amara*, demonstrated clinical relevance in bridging gut–skin and emotional dynamics.

Conclusion: Understanding the mind–gut–skin axis provides a strong scientific framework supporting constitutional Homoeopathic prescribing. Future clinical studies correlating psychometric and microbiome markers with remedy response are warranted.

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KEYWORDS: Acne vulgaris, psychosocial stress, gut–skin axis, homoeopathy, constitutional prescribing.

1. INTRODUCTION

Acne vulgaris is a chronic inflammatory condition of the pilosebaceous unit influenced not only by hormones and microbial presence but also by emotional and digestive health. Recent biomedical research has highlighted the **gut–skin axis**, a bidirectional communication network linking gastrointestinal microbiota, immune response, and dermatological expressions. Psychosocial stress alters intestinal permeability, stimulates hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal (HPA) axis activity, and increases inflammatory cytokine production. These systemic effects contribute to inflammatory acne lesions, heightened sebum secretion, and delayed skin repair. Homoeopathy considers emotional state, digestive patterns, food cravings, and constitutional temperament, making it well-positioned to address this multidimensional pathology.

2. Psychosocial Stress and Acne Expression

Stress activates corticotropin-releasing hormone (CRH), increasing sebaceous gland activity and stimulating keratinocyte proliferation. Persistent emotional strain leads to:

- Increased cortisol levels
- Dysregulated inflammatory signalling
- Worsening of acne lesions during emotional upset

Clinical studies report higher anxiety, self-image concern, and social avoidance in acne patients (Thapa & Ghimire, 2020). Homoeopathic remedy selection typically begins with understanding emotional response patterns, making stress-pattern assessment clinically relevant.

3. Gut–Skin Axis Mechanisms in Acne Vulgaris

3.1 Intestinal Microbiota Influence

Dysbiosis leads to:

- Increased intestinal permeability (“leaky gut”)
- Translocation of inflammatory mediators into systemic circulation
- Exacerbation of inflammatory skin disease

3.2 Diet-Linked Dermatological Responses

High glycemic index foods, saturated fats, and processed foods influence:

- Insulin resistance
- IGF-1 elevation
- Excessive sebum production

3.3 Gut Symptoms Common in Acne Patients

Symptom	Homoeopathic Relevance
Bloating	Lycopodium profile
Constipation	Sulphur, Nux vomica
Food intolerance	Calcarea carb, Antimonium crudum
Emotional eating	Natrum mur, Pulsatilla

These gut signs form part of the totality used for remedy differentiation.

4. Homoeopathic Constitutional Remedy Selection

4.1 Key Constitutional Patterns Observed

Remedy	Psychological Features	Gut Features	Skin Expression
Pulsatilla	Mild, weepy, seeks reassurance	Poor fat digestion	Soft, inflamed acne aggravated before menses
Natrum muriaticum	Reserved, emotional suppression	Dry mucosa	Persistent oily T-zone with hormonal triggers
Lycopodium clavatum	Anxiety with insecurity	Gas, distention, craving sweets	Right-sided acne, worse evening
Sulphur	Intellect-centred, egotistic thinking	Heat, strong appetite	Red, itchy, pustular acne
Ignatia amara	Conflict grief response	Psychosomatic gastric tension	Fluctuating acne severity during emotional distress

The remedy is not selected for the acne but for the person who develops acne in response to stress and gut imbalance.

5. Clinical Integration Model Proposed

Mind – Gut – Skin Case Assessment Algorithm

1. Assess stress history and emotional triggers
 2. Evaluate digestion and food craving patterns
 3. Observe skin eruption characteristics
 4. Identify constitutional modality patterns
 5. Repertorize using personality + gut + skin totality
 6. Select potency based on sensitivity and reactivity
 7. Reassess every 4–6 weeks
- This model aligns psychoneuroendocrine dermatology with classical Homoeopathy.

6. DISCUSSION

This literature review supports the hypothesis that Homoeopathy addresses acne most effectively when constitutional analysis incorporates stress patterns and gut physiology. The gut–skin axis provides a biological basis for what Homoeopathic practitioners have historically understood as mind–body unity.

However, robust research linking microbiome markers and remedy response remains limited. Future directions include:

- Microbiome sequencing before and after treatment
- Cortisol and inflammatory marker monitoring
- Psychological stress scoring as part of case analysis

7. CONCLUSION

Understanding acne through the lens of psychosocial stress and the gut–skin axis strengthens the scientific rationale for constitutional Homoeopathic prescribing. Remedies selected based on totality and individuality may regulate emotional resilience, digestive function, and inflammatory pathways, contributing to holistic recovery.

8. Ethical Statement

This review did not involve patient data collection. Ethical approval was not required.

9. Author Contributions

Author	Contribution
Dr. Aarti G. Kanchar	Conceptualisation, manuscript drafting, and theoretical articulation.
Dr Meghana B. Shewalkar	Literature review, integration of clinical psychological references, editing and positioning.

Both authors approve the final manuscript.

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