



Review Article

AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT OF TEETHING IN INFANTS AND CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

Teething can lead to many problems in children such as irritability, crying, loss of appetite, diarrhea, vomitings, fever. Managing the symptoms of teething is very complex because of the side effects the treatment involves in children. This review presents a deep insight into the management of teething with homeopathy and in special reference to Chamomila.

Key Words: *Teething; Management; Chamomilla*

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INTRODUCTION

Dental Treatment can become a challenge sometimes because of the side effects it involves. It is a well-known fact that every kind of therapy involved in the management of diseases has its advantages and disadvantages¹. In a similar manner, allopathic treatment has its advantages and disadvantages. But our emphasis should always be on methods to nullify those disadvantages or the side effects and provide our patients' with the best possible treatment. Homeopathy has recently gained significant importance in nullifying these side effects. Hence, an attempt to effectively combine these two treatment ideologies (i.e. allopathy and homeopathy) would be of significant benefit to provide our patients' with the best treatment options.

Teething is a common term given to eruption of primary and permanent dentition. It is a new experience for the child with some physiological changes happening in the body as well as in the mouth. Usually, teething begins around 6 months of age and continues in life till all teeth have finally erupted inside the mouth. For an infant, it can be a very difficult experience to handle as it involves significant body changes which the infant might not be able to handle as effectively as an child or an adolescent². A look at the eruption period of different teeth gives us an idea regarding the timing around which children can face the teething issue.

Central incisor : 6-12 months of age
Lateral incisor : 9-16 months of age

Canine : 16-23 months of age
First molar : 13-19 months of age
Second molar : 22-24 months of age

The eruption of primary teeth is eagerly awaited by the parents. Usually, the process of eruption doesn't pose any distress but it can sometimes vary from minor to major signs such as hyperemia or swelling, irritability and crying, loss of appetite, sleeplessness or restlessness, increased salivation and drooling, fever, diarrhea or vomitings and may even progress onto and show signs of bronchitis³. So the need for management arises in such situations. Various methodologies as well as home measures are available for infants in this age to overcome teething like the use of teething rings, chewing onto hard fruits or foods like carrots and radishes, or using a gauze dipped in warm saline over the gum pads. Measures in allopathy include use of anti-inflammatory agents. A detailed discussion over the treatment methods is needed important.

MANAGEMENT

General measures or use of teething objects:
Variety of objects such as hard fruits such as apple or guava
Use of toasted bread that can also stimulate gingiva and can increase blood supply o the area
Teething rings
Pacifiers which release preventive agents such as sodium fluoride and xylitol into the mouth
Teething necklaces.
These methods work by satisfying the natural urge of an infant⁴ to bite on hard food.

MEDICAL MANAGEMENT

It is usually done by topical application of medicine
Topical application of glycerin: mild antiseptic
Topical application of lignocaine hydrochloride : provides relief
Topical application of Benzoyl alcohol
All these treatment options provide relief to the patient but they come with the side effects if swallowed and because the child can't be made to expectorate, so there are high chances of them to swallow the drug applied which can lead to systemic problems.
Methamoglobinemia is the most common side effect in teething children when gels with

benzocaine (orajel) are applied. Methamoglobinemia⁵ is a condition where the oxygen carried through blood stream is reduced. Other medicines such as Ibuprofen (Brufen®) being a NSAID (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug) can also be used to provide a temporary relief from pain and fever. All these treatment options have their advantages as well as disadvantages so we need to come to a plan that can provide us with minimal or no side effects. Studies carried out using Chamomilla have shown that it can be effectively used for the management of teething. Chamomilla treatment inhibited the release of LPS-induced prostaglandins E2. This effect was found to be due to inhibition of COX – 2 enzyme activity by chamomilla. In addition, chamomilla caused reduction in LPS-induced COX – 2 mRNA and protein expression, without affecting COX-1 expression. Chamomilla works by a mechanism of action similar to that attributed to non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs which can be classified into Selective COX – 2 inhibitors. Dentokind®¹ (Deutsche Homöopathie-Union, DHU, Karlsruhe, Germany) gel primarily consists of five substances: Belladonna D6, Chamomilla D6, Ferrum, phosphoricum D6, Hepar sulfuris D12 and Pulsatilla D6. It is indicated for the treatment of symptoms associated with teething. It is available as tablets allowed to dissolve slowly in the mouth. Ashton and Parsons Infant Powders®² (SSL International PLC, Knutsford) contains matricaria tincture (4 mg). Tincture matricaria is a gentle solution made from oils found within flower heads of Chamomille plant. It is also used to relieve the symptoms of teething.

CONCLUSION

Thus, with use of Chamomila and other agents available as natural remedies, we can assure natural and best treatment with minimal side effects in infants. However, long term studies are still warranted to understand the effects of such medicaments in a wide variety of subjects and to understand the side effects (if any) associated with them.

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