

## A CASE STUDY OF EFFECTIVENESS OF LYCOPODIUM IN DANDRUFF

\*<sup>1</sup>Dr. Riffat Khatoon, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Raj Kumar Sharma, <sup>3</sup>Dr. Lakhan Singh Kotiya

<sup>1</sup>PG Scholar, Department of Homoeopathic Materia Medica, Ramkrishna College of Homoeopathy and Medical Sciences, Airport Bypass Road, Gandhi Nagar, Bhopal.

<sup>2</sup>Professor & HOD, Department of H.M.M. Ram Krishna College of Homoeopathy and Medical Sciences Bhopal, Pin- 462033.

<sup>3</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of H.M.M. Ram Krishna College of Homoeopathy & Medical Sciences Bhopal, Pin- 462033.

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### \*Corresponding Author

**Dr. Riffat Khatoon**

PG Scholar, Department of  
Homoeopathic Materia Medica,  
Ramkrishna College of  
Homoeopathy and Medical Sciences,  
Airport Bypass Road, Gandhi Nagar,  
Bhopal.



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### ABSTRACT

Dandruff is a common scalp disorder characterized by flaking, itching, and varying degrees of irritation, often affecting personal comfort and social confidence. Although conventional measures such as medicated shampoos may provide temporary symptomatic relief, recurrence is common and constitutional aspects are often left unaddressed. Homoeopathy, by emphasizing individualization and totality of symptoms, offers a broader therapeutic approach. This case study presents a 24-year-old male with persistent dandruff of eight months' duration, associated with intense itching of the scalp, profuse white flaky scales, worse from heat and after washing, and marked embarrassment in public due to visible shedding over dark clothing. The patient also reported bloating after small quantities of food, craving for sweets, irritability on contradiction, reduced self-confidence despite intellectual

capability, and aggravation of complaints in the late afternoon and evening. On detailed case-taking and evaluation of the characteristic mental and physical generals, Lycopodium clavatum was selected as the constitutional remedy. The patient was prescribed Lycopodium 200C in a single dose followed by placebo and observed over a period of three months. Gradual improvement was noted in itching, quantity of scaling, scalp comfort, and overall

well-being. By the end of follow-up, dandruff had reduced markedly with no fresh severe relapse. This case suggests that individualized Homoeopathic prescribing with *Lycopodium* may be beneficial in selected patients of dandruff presenting with characteristic constitutional features.

**KEYWORDS:** Dandruff, Homoeopathy, *Lycopodium clavatum*, Scalp scaling, Constitutional prescribing, Case study.

## INTRODUCTION

Dandruff is a frequently encountered scalp condition characterized by excessive shedding of epidermal flakes from the scalp, often accompanied by itching and irritation. In some patients, the condition is dry and powdery, while in others it may be associated with greasy scaling and mild inflammation. Though usually not a serious disease, it may become a persistent and distressing complaint because of its visibility, recurrence, and effect on self-esteem.

From a conventional standpoint, management is generally directed toward local control through cleansing agents, keratolytic preparations, or antifungal shampoos. Such approaches may help reduce visible scaling, but recurrence remains common in susceptible individuals. In Homoeopathy, the disease is not seen as isolated, but in relation to the patient's constitution, susceptibilities, mental state, physical generals and characteristic particulars.

Hahnemann stressed the importance of treating the whole of the symptoms and the patient individually, and not the name of the disease (Hahnemann, 1842/1996). Kent also stressed the value of characteristic generals and mental symptoms in the selection of the remedy (Kent, 1900). In chronic recurrent scalp complaints such as dandruff, this individualized approach may help in selecting a remedy capable of acting beyond superficial palliation.

The present case illustrates the role of *Lycopodium clavatum* in a patient suffering from dandruff whose constitutional picture corresponded closely to the remedy.

## **Lycopodium**

*Lycopodium clavatum*, prepared from the spores of club moss, is a well-known constitutional remedy in Homoeopathic Materia Medica. It has marked action on the digestive system, liver, urinary organs, skin, and the nervous sphere. Its symptomatology often includes flatulence,

abdominal distension, weakness with lack of confidence, irritability, anticipatory anxiety, and aggravation in the late afternoon and evening (Boericke, 1927; Kent, 1905).

Lycopodium is described by Kent as intellectually capable but lacking in confidence and often sensitive to contradiction and irritable at home but more controlled in public (Kent, 1905). Boericke describes digestive disturbances such as feeling full after small quantities, bloating and craving for sweets as characteristic of it (Boericke, 1927). Clarke and Allen also describe its utility in chronic skin conditions where constitutional symptoms support the prescription (Clarke, 1902; Allen, 1898).

In relation to scalp and skin complaints, Lycopodium may be considered when there is chronicity, itching, dryness or scaling, constitutional digestive disturbance, and a clear general and mental correspondence. The remedy is not chosen merely because dandruff is present, but because the patient as a whole reflects the Lycopodium picture.

## **CASE PRESENTATION**

### **Patient details**

A 24-year-old unmarried male student presented to the Homoeopathic outpatient department (OPD No: 339263) with complaints of persistent dandruff and itching of the scalp for the last eight months.

### **Chief complaint**

The patient complained of profuse white flaky dandruff over the scalp, itching especially in the evening, visible shedding of scales on shoulders and clothes, and mild scalp dryness with occasional scratch marks due to itching.

### **History of present illness**

The complaint had started insidiously around eight months earlier during a period of academic stress. Initially, there was slight flaking of the scalp, mostly noticeable after combing. Over the next few months, the scaling increased gradually and became visible over dark clothes. Itching of the scalp developed, worse in the evening and after sweating. The patient reported that washing the hair gave temporary freshness, but within a day the dryness and flaking would return. He had tried over-the-counter anti-dandruff shampoos with partial short-term relief, but the complaint recurred as before.

There was no history suggestive of psoriasis, fungal infection elsewhere, or major scalp lesions. No pustules or bleeding lesions were reported. The complaint was more troublesome in warm weather and during periods of mental strain. He felt embarrassed in college because friends had commented on the flakes over his shirt.

### **Past history**

Frequent episodes of abdominal bloating since adolescence. No major skin disease in the past. No history of diabetes, hypertension, asthma, or tuberculosis. No significant surgical history.

### **Family history**

Father had chronic dyspepsia. Mother had a tendency toward dry skin. There was no known family history of psoriasis or other major dermatological disease.

### **Mental generals**

The patient was intelligent and performed reasonably well academically, but he admitted to marked lack of self-confidence before presentations and examinations. He said that before any important event he would become anxious, though once the event began he managed better. He described himself as easily irritated at home, particularly when contradicted by family members. He preferred appreciation and disliked criticism. He was shy on the outside, but insecure within, and feared that others judged him harshly on his appearance.

He also reported avoiding wearing black shirt due to embarrassment of having dandruff and the flakes were easily visible. He wanted to appear neat and presentable but felt frustrated that despite repeated washing the condition persisted.

### **Physical generals**

Appetite was good, but he felt full quickly. There was strong tendency to bloating after small quantities of food. He had marked craving for sweets. Thirst was moderate. He was a warm patient and disliked heat. Perspiration was moderate, more on the scalp during stress. Stool was generally regular though with gaseous distension. Sleep was adequate but unrefreshing during periods of stress. Energy was reduced in the evening. Complaints were distinctly worse from 4 pm to 8 pm.

### Particulars

Dandruff was profuse, white, dry, and flour-like. Scalp itching was worse in the evening and after sweating. Washing gave temporary relief, followed by recurrence. Scaling was more noticeable over the frontal and parietal scalp. There were no thick crusts or marked oozing lesions. Scratching gave momentary relief but increased irritation afterward.

### Totality of symptoms

1. Lack of self-confidence with anticipatory anxiety
2. Irritability from contradiction
3. Embarrassment and sensitivity regarding appearance
4. Bloating and fullness after small quantities of food
5. Craving for sweets
6. Warm patient, worse from heat
7. Complaints worse in late afternoon and evening
8. Chronic dandruff with itching and dry white scales

### Miasmatic Background

Psora and Sycosis

**Psora** is responsible for itching, scaling and dryness of scalp

**Sycosis** when it is associated with metabolic dysfunction that leads to oily and greasy scalp which serves as breeding ground for fungi.

### Repertorial and Clinical Reasoning

The case was analyzed by giving priority to characteristic mental generals, physical generals, and the associated digestive symptoms rather than the local complaint alone. The following rubrics were considered in repertorial evaluation through a Kentian approach.

S. No.	Rubric	Relevance
1	Mind - want of self-confidence	Lycopodium
2	Mind - irritability - contradiction, from	Lycopodium
3	Mind - anxiety - anticipation, from	Lycopodium
4	Stomach - appetite - small quantities satisfy	Lycopodium
5	Abdomen - distension - after eating little	Lycopodium
6	Generalities - evening aggravation	Lycopodium
7	Head - eruption/scurf - scalp	Lycopodium
8	Head - itching - scalp - evening	Lycopodium

Though local dandruff could suggest many remedies, the strong concurrence of low confidence, anticipatory anxiety, irritability, flatulence after little food, craving for sweets, and evening aggravation strongly pointed toward *Lycopodium clavatum*. Kent and Boericke both describe this constitutional pattern prominently (Kent, 1905; Boericke, 1927).

Other remedies considered briefly included Sulphur, Graphites, and Natrum muriaticum. However, the patient lacked the marked heat and untidiness of Sulphur, the sticky exudative tendency of Graphites, and the more reserved grief-oriented picture often associated with Natrum muriaticum. The digestive and mental profile corresponded most closely with *Lycopodium*.

### **Prescription**

*Lycopodium clavatum* 200C, one dose, followed by placebo for 15 days.

The patient was advised to avoid frequent changing of shampoos, wash the scalp gently, avoid excessive scratching, maintain regular sleep and hydration, and observe changes without applying medicated scalp products unless required. A single dose of the constitutional remedy was prescribed on the basis of the characteristic totality, with placebo given subsequently to allow observation of remedy action without unnecessary repetition.

### **Follow-up of 3 Months**

#### **First follow-up - 15 days**

The patient reported slight reduction in itching. Flaking was still present but less intense than before. He felt the scalp was a little calmer. Digestive bloating was also marginally better. No new symptoms appeared. Assessment: early favorable response. Placebo was continued for 15 days.

#### **Second follow-up - 1 month**

The patient stated that dandruff had reduced by around 30 to 40 percent subjectively. Flakes over clothes were less frequent. Itching persisted but was milder and mainly after sweating. His embarrassment had reduced somewhat because the scaling was not as obvious as before. Bloating after meals was less troublesome. Assessment: improvement in local complaint and generals. Placebo was continued.

**Third follow-up - 6 weeks**

Further improvement was noted. The scalp showed reduced visible scaling on examination. Itching was occasional and no longer intense. The patient said that he felt more comfortable attending college and was less preoccupied with his scalp. Appetite remained good, fullness after eating had reduced, and evening fatigue was slightly better. Assessment: continued improvement under previous prescription. Placebo was continued.

**Fourth follow-up - 2 months**

A mild increase in flaking was reported after a period of examination stress and irregular sleep, though it was still much less than at baseline. Itching increased slightly in the evening for a few days. The general improvement, however, remained overall positive. Since the earlier improvement had slowed and a mild relapse tendency appeared, repetition was considered. *Lycopodium clavatum* 200C, one dose, followed by placebo.

**Fifth follow-up - 3 months**

At the end of three months, the patient reported marked improvement. Dandruff was minimal, with only occasional fine scaling remaining, and itching was rare. Visible shedding on clothes had almost disappeared. Scalp comfort had improved significantly. He also reported less bloating, better tolerance of daily routine, and improved confidence in social situations. No adverse effects were noted during treatment.

**Outcome Snapshot**

Parameter	Baseline	3 months	Trend
Itching	Moderate to marked	Minimal	Improved
Scaling	Profuse	Occasional fine scaling	Improved
Visibility on clothes	Frequent	Almost absent	Improved
Bloating	Frequent	Reduced	Improved
Confidence	Low	Better	Improved

**CONCLUSION**

This case demonstrates the usefulness of individualized Homoeopathic prescribing in a patient with chronic dandruff whose constitutional picture corresponded to *Lycopodium clavatum*. The improvement was not limited to the local scalp complaint alone; associated general symptoms such as bloating, evening aggravation, and reduced confidence also showed positive change during follow-up.

Dandruff is often treated as a purely local disorder, yet recurrent cases may benefit from a more individualized assessment. In this patient, the selection of Lycopodium was based on the totality of symptoms, especially the characteristic mental state, digestive disturbance, thermal modality, and time aggravation. The gradual improvement over three months supports the Homoeopathic principle that constitutional treatment may be beneficial when the remedy is selected on clear individual indications.

As this is a single case, broad generalization is not possible. Nevertheless, it suggests that Lycopodium may be considered in dandruff cases where a corresponding constitutional picture is present.

### **Other Homoeopathic Remedies Used in Dandruff**

#### **Sulphur**

Sulphur is frequently considered in scalp complaints with itching, heat, aggravation from warmth, and a tendency to scratching. It is often useful in chronic skin conditions where itching is prominent and the patient shows marked heat and untidiness (Kent, 1905; Boericke, 1927).

#### **Kali sulphuricum**

Kali sulphuricum is often associated with yellowish scaling, epithelial desquamation, and recurring superficial skin complaints. It may be considered in dandruff where scaling is prominent and symptoms tend to worsen in warm rooms.

#### **Graphites**

Graphites is more suited where scalp eruptions are associated with sticky or moist exudation, fissures, and thick crust formation. It is especially considered in patients with rough skin and a tendency to cracking or oozing lesions (Boericke, 1927; Clarke, 1902).

#### **Natrum muriaticum**

Natrum muriaticum may be useful where scalp scaling is associated with dryness, headaches, and a reserved emotional state. It is often thought of in patients who are sensitive, inwardly emotional, and prone to chronic recurrent complaints.

**Arsenicum album**

Arsenicum album may be considered when itching is intense, restlessness is marked, and the condition is associated with burning or irritation, often worse at night. It may suit anxious, chilly, and fastidious patients.

**Thuja**

Thuja has a sphere of action on the skin and may be considered in chronic scalp and seborrhoeic tendencies, especially when there is greasy skin, fixed constitutional features, or a broader sycotic background.

**Mezereum**

Mezereum is often mentioned for thick crusts on the scalp with itching beneath the crusts and irritation that becomes troublesome from scratching. It is more suited when the scalp condition is crusty rather than simply dry and powdery (Allen, 1898).

**Psorinum**

Psorinum is considered in dirty-looking, offensive, or relapsing skin conditions with marked debility and chilliness. In stubborn recurrent dandruff with strong psoric features and poor vitality, it may come into consideration.

**Conflict of Interest**

The author declares no conflict of interest in relation to this case study.

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