

Review Article

## Flu/Influenza- Vaccine Approach vs Homoeopathic Approach

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### Article History

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**Abstract:** In the month of August 2026, there have been 2400 cases of H1N1 virus or the Swine Flu virus. This has triggered viral fears regarding the seasonal flu infection as it is keeping low immunity in affected people. Some have experienced it as a debilitating virus as others have recovered & also had relapses. Here, the flu shot can take the sting out of the viral infection. The article discusses the modalities of the vaccine, its challenges & limitations in the light of the virus's changing nature. It offers a sustainable & effective tool to deal with flu viruses through improvement of immunity of the body & the gut. Homoeopathy is the tool to address the flu issue in an effective & sustainable way as the flu issue is not a one-time factor but a perennial issue. Further, the article emphasizes upon the clinical effectivity, therapeutic effectivity, no side effect property & the cost-effective aspect of homoeopathy. It is these properties that make the homoeopathic system of therapeutics as an effective tool to deal with the flu menace that challenges humanity every year.

**Keywords:** Vaccine, Flu, Influenza, AEFI, Homoeopathy.

## INTRODUCTION

The major approach for flu in modern medicine is the vaccine approach which is not a treatment but a prevention. It introduces immune system to antigens or killed virus particles. After the vaccine the body makes proteins of disease fighting nature & these proteins also recognize the virus. In flu vaccine, this protection develops after two weeks of the vaccine shot. There is a catch here. The vaccine works best when the strain closely matches the flu viruses that circulate in the population at that point of time. There is another catch here. The vaccinated person can still get the flu however a vaccinated person's body can respond faster & limit the viral spread. Thus, the process lowers the risk of severe disease, pneumonia, hospital stay & mortality [1, 2].

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The biggest catch here is that one flu vaccine is not enough & one needs to take the vaccine annually. It is because Influenza A & B viruses change constantly. Tiny genetic changes can alter viral surface proteins. That's why antibodies from the last year's vaccine may not recognize the newer viruses. Scientists have to constantly monitor flu viruses across the globe to help them update the vaccine strains for each season. In a vaccinated body, antibody protection starts fading after 6 months & that too there is a faster decline in geriatrics & chronically ill patients [1, 2].

World Health Organization (WHO) has two formulations of the flu vaccine. The Northern Hemisphere (NH) & the Southern Hemisphere (SH) formulations. One has to take a winter shot for the three strains of the virus that circulate in August regarding the NH. For SH, it recommends a shot in February when the three strains of the virus circulate. India adopts the SH formulation [1, 2].

For example, the residents of Jammu & Kashmir should take the shot before winter. Similarly for Kerala & Maharashtra, the time of the shot is April to June. For Delhi & West Bengal it is by July & for Tamil Nadu, the time is August to September. However, like any other vaccination if the ideal time period is missed one is advised to take it at a later stage rather than skipping the vaccine [3, 4].

If one takes the flu vaccine every year, it gives the immune system an updated target before the next flu season. Across the nation flu occurs throughout the year. Peaks of the infection differ by climate, region & usually coincide with the monsoons. It is advised to take the shot before the rise of infections locally [1-4].

### Reviews at a Glance

Flu & flu like ailments are other respiratory viruses like Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), COVID-19 virus, dengue virus & malaria. In flu, there will be fever, cough, sore throat, body ache & fatigue. Dengue will have high fever, body ache, eye pain & rash. Malaria will have fever, chills & sweating. It is to be noted that most viral ailments start with fever, cough, body ache & flu-like symptoms. Every time it is not influenza. Hence diagnosis is critical [4, 5].

The types of flu vaccines depend on the number of strains. The types are trivalent & quadrivalent. Trivalent vaccine protects against two strains of influenza A virus & one strain of influenza B virus. WHO recommends this vaccine. The quadrivalent vaccine protects against two strains each of influenza A & B. Usually it is seen that one strain B virus is no longer in the circulation [4, 5].

The flu vaccines are made by three methods. These are egg based, cell based & recombinant based. In egg based the virus is grown in hen's eggs. The cell based are grown in mammalian cells. The recombinant based uses the viral genetic material to produce a key surface protein. Here, the whole flu virus is not grown in the laboratory [4, 5].

Cases of Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI) can also occur in flu vaccine. These can be in the form of allergic reaction after the previous flu shot, reaction to a component of the vaccine, occurrence of Guillain-Barre syndrome within 6 weeks of previous flu shot & illness on the vaccination day itself [1-5].

### Reflections

Flu is not new to humans. Epidemics & Pandemics have occurred in the past across the globe. There is no treatment available in modern medicine till date. The vaccine is only a preventable approach. Besides the general approach, an individualistic & a personalized approach is also need of the hour especially for the geriatrics & chronically ill patients. Having said that the other end of the spectrum is also crucial to address i.e. the children [5].

Childhood is already loaded with vaccines right from birth. Adding a vaccine every year to address the flu issue is not a sustainable intervention. Besides vaccines, one must address the overall health & immunity to only deal with flu viruses but all viruses in general.

### Homoeopathic Approach

With the support of Pasteur institute, 3 parts of Asiatic virus & 1 part of European virus is mixed & cultured on a chicken embryo to get the original material from where the homoeopathic nosode is prepared by the homoeopathic drug manufacturers. Nosodes in homoeopathy are medicines that are prepared from diseases & their end products & disease-causing organisms [6].

The nosode prepared with the material provided by the Pasteur institute is 'Influenzinum'. In homoeopathy, it is not only a medicine for flu/influenza but also for 'post influenza depressive neurosis'. It is also a medicine for head, eyes, ears, nose, throat, abdomen, respiratory ailments, heart & the extremities as well [6, 7].

The therapeutic index of Boericke's Materia Medica gives 9 drugs under influenza. These are 'Ars', 'Baptisia', 'Bryonia', 'Ery A', 'Eucalyptus', 'Eup Per', 'Gels', 'Lobelia C', 'Rhus tox' [6].

Murphy's repertory describes eight drugs as the leading drugs for influenza. These are 'Arsenic', 'Baptisia', 'Bryonia', 'Eup Per', 'Gelsemium', 'Oscillococcinum', 'Phos', 'Rhustox' [7, 8].

Dr. Murphy in his Materia Medica under the drug 'Lomatium Dissectum' mentions that during the influenza epidemic in Northern Nevada, United States in 1918, Dr. Ernst Krebs (M.D.) of Carson-city was surprised to see the local Washoe people recovering fast from influenza & upon inquiry he was told by the Washoe people that the medicine is 'Toh-sa' or 'Do-sa'. He called it as Balsamea due to its biting odor of Balsamic resins [7].

He also found that there was not a single death in the Washoe tribe from influenza or its complications. Dr. Murphy also mentions that there is probably no therapeutic agent in the treatment of influenzal pneumonia or lobar pneumonia if the drug is given early [7].

Dr. Murphy mentions 18 clinical uses of the drug 'Lomatium Dissectum'. These are AIDS, bacterial infections, bronchitis, candida, chronic fatigue, colds, hepatitis, herpes, HIV, immune weakness, influenza, lung disorders, pneumonia, sinusitis, sores, tuberculosis, viral infections & wounds [7].

Dr. Murphy also mentions 'Mentha Piperita' also as a drug for influenza.

In his repertory, Dr. Phatak gives four rubrics for influenza. These are influenza as the main rubric & there are three sub rubrics under this main rubric. These are 'gastric', 'pain remaining after' & 'weakness remaining after'. There are one drugs each under the first two sub rubrics & four drugs under the third sub rubric. There are 12 drugs under the main rubric [9].

The drugs under the main rubric are 'Ars Iod', 'Baptisia', 'Bryonia', 'Camphor', 'Causticum', 'Eup P', 'Fer P', 'Gels', 'Merc', 'Nux V', 'Rhus T', 'Sabadilla' [9].

Under the sub rubric 'gastric', the drug is "Baptisia" [9].

Under the next sub rubric, the drug is 'Lycopersicum' [9].

Under the last sub rubric, the drugs are 'Abrotanum', 'Conium', 'Kali Phos', 'Nat Sal' [9].

As the gut health or immunity is involved, all the bowel nosodes can be prescribed along with these medicines to optimize gut immunity & there by impacting the overall immunity of the body positively [10].

In viral infections like COVID 19, homoeopathy has already proved its efficacy during the global pandemic. The lead author had published three articles in this context [11-13].

The homoeopathic principle is also applicable in Influenza/Flu as it is a viral infection also like COVID 19 [11-13].

## CONCLUSIONS

Viral infections like influenza have a long history of affecting humanity for centuries now. The cases are still surging even after the use of flu vaccines. Viral infections & their recurrence can be curbed by addressing overall immunity & especially the gut immunity. Here, it is not only the flu infections but also the after effects of flu that are more debilitating in nature.

This is exactly where homoeopathy comes into the picture while filling the gap. As mentioned above, it will address the gut immunity & as well as the overall immunity of the body by addressing the blood related & cell related immunity.

One has to adhere to the diet & regimen practices so that the nutritional need of the body is also addressed. This will address the gut immunity & there by catalyze the overall immunity of the body.

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