

Correlation Between Mental Symptoms and Liver Pathology in Homoeopathy

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Abstract

The liver, a central organ for metabolism and detoxification, influences not only physical health but also emotional equilibrium. Homoeopathy recognizes that disturbances in vital organs may first manifest through characteristic mental symptoms. This review explores correlations between mental symptoms and liver pathology from a homoeopathic standpoint, supported by psychoneuroimmunological, historical, and clinical perspectives. Key remedies such as *Nux vomica*, *Chelidonium majus*, *Lycopodium clavatum*, *Sepia officinalis*, and *Sulphur* exemplify parallel expressions of hepatic dysfunction and emotional imbalance. Understanding these associations enhances individualised prescribing and supports early detection of latent liver disorders.

Keywords: Liver, Mental symptoms, Homoeopathy, Psychoneuroimmunology, Chelidonium, Nux vomica

1. Introduction

Homoeopathy emphasizes the unity of mind and body, considering mental and emotional symptoms as the earliest indicators of internal disturbance (1,2,5). The liver's roles in metabolism, detoxification, digestion, and hormonal regulation make it crucial for maintaining physiological and emotional stability.

Modern hepatology confirms that liver dysfunction is frequently accompanied by behavioral and neurocognitive changes such as irritability, apathy, confusion, and mood instability (3,4). Homoeopathic philosophy also recognizes these mental signs as important indicators of hepatic imbalance. This review integrates homoeopathic literature with contemporary scientific findings to explore the mind–liver connection.

2. Historical and Theoretical Background

2.1 Ancient and Classical Perspectives

Ancient Babylonian and Greek systems associated the liver with emotions, vitality, and temperament. Hippocrates described “madness from bile,” while Galen linked emotional temperament to hepatic secretions. These early frameworks laid the foundation for understanding hepatic contributions to emotional expression.

2.2 Modern Medical Observations

Psychiatric features of liver disease—including agitation, mood swings, apathy, and confusion—were formally recognized by mid-20th century hepatology (4). Today, neuropsychiatric manifestations are known to precede or accompany biochemical and structural liver changes (3).

2.3 Homoeopathic Philosophy

Homoeopathy views disease as a deviation in the vital force, expressed primarily through mental symptoms (2,5). In hepatic disorders, mental features such as irritability, indifference, anxiety, pessimism, or mental dullness often precede physical signs. Therefore, mental symptoms play a central role in remedy selection.

2.4 GNM Perspective

German New Medicine links liver parenchymal changes to “starvation conflicts”—symbolic or literal experiences of deprivation. Homoeopathy similarly associates liver dysfunction with themes of insecurity, responsibility burden, fear of poverty, and frustration. Although philosophically distinct, both acknowledge emotional conflict as a factor influencing hepatic function.

3. Psychological Correlates of Liver Dysfunction

Traditional systems such as Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese Medicine connect anger, irritability, frustration, and emotional stagnation with liver imbalance (6). Homoeopathic sources similarly describe emotional patterns related to hepatic dysfunction.

Common Mental Symptoms in Hepatic Disturbance

- **Irritability, anger** – *Nux vomica, Chelidonium majus* (13,14)
- **Depression, indifference** – *Sepia, Sulphur* (14,15)
- **Performance anxiety, insecurity** – *Lycopodium, Phosphorus* (14)
- **Hypersensitivity, mood variability** – *China, Natrum sulphuricum* (14,15)

These emotional indicators often precede physical pathology and assist in identifying early hepatic imbalance.

4. Homoeopathic Remedies Illustrating the Mind–Liver Relationship

Key Remedies and Their Mental–Hepatic Correlation (1,12,13,14,15)

Medicine	Mental Symptoms (associated with liver pathology)	Physical Symptoms (liver, digestion, gallbladder)
Nux Vomica	Irritable, quarrelsome, oversensitive; anger from slightest cause; impatience; mental strain after alcohol or overeating.	Liver soreness and congestion; stitching pain in right hypochondrium; constipation with ineffectual urging; morning nausea; alcoholic liver dysfunction; bilious headaches.
Chelidonium Majus	Anxiety with liver pain; confused, dull; desire to lie down quietly; depression with jaundice.	Classic right scapular pain; enlarged tender liver; jaundice with clay-coloured stool; bitter taste; gallstones; alternating constipation and diarrhoea; hepatitis.
Lycopodium	Irritability with low confidence; fear of failure; anticipatory anxiety; mental fatigue 4–8 pm; mood worsens with flatulence.	Liver fullness; distension worse tight clothing; hepatomegaly; sour belching; right-sided complaints; intolerance to onions/garlic; gallstone colic.
Sulphur	Mental dullness; egoistic yet lazy; irritability from congestion; forgetfulness worse in heat.	Liver congestion; burning in hepatic region; haemorrhoids; morning diarrhoea; craving sweets; heat in soles; portal stasis.
Carduus Marianus (Q)	Mental dullness with jaundice; irritability.	Fatty liver; alcoholic liver; right-sided pain to shoulder; portal congestion; jaundice; enlarged liver and spleen.
Taraxacum (Q)	Nervous irritability from sluggish liver.	Bitter taste; mapped tongue; bilious states; gastric discomfort; hepatic congestion.
Podophyllum	Depression; mental sluggishness; involuntary speech during hepatic crises.	Profuse offensive watery diarrhoea; liver soreness; gallstone colic; bilious vomiting; torpid liver.
Mercurius Solubilis	Anxiety, confusion, suspiciousness; restlessness with hepatic swelling.	Enlarged liver; jaundice; metallic taste; salivation; hepatitis; clay stools; night-time diarrhoea.
Bryonia	Irritable; prefers solitude; fear of poverty; slow thinking in bilious states.	Stitching liver pains worse motion; constipation with dryness; hepatitis; intense thirst; gastric catarrh.
Phosphorus	Anxiety; fear of being alone; emotional sensitivity; weeping with liver congestion.	Fatty liver; hepatic degeneration; hemorrhagic tendency; craving cold drinks; morning diarrhoea; vomiting after water becomes warm in stomach.
Sepia	Indifference to loved ones; irritability; apathy from portal stasis; mental dullness after eating.	Liver ptosis; gallbladder congestion; yellow facial discoloration; constipation with ball-like stool; aversion to fatty foods.
China officinalis	Hypersensitive to noise/touch; irritability; mental dullness with liver–spleen congestion.	Enlarged liver and spleen; bloating; bitter taste; gallstone colic; periodic fevers; weakness from fluid loss.
Iris Versicolor	Irritability during bilious attacks; mental confusion; depression with liver issues.	Burning in stomach and liver; bilious vomiting; migraine with hepatic origin; diarrhoea after fatty food.
Chionanthus (Q)	Irritability and mental dullness during jaundice.	Jaundice; gallstone pain; dark urine; enlarged liver; frontal headache from hepatic disorder.

5. Modern Scientific Correlation

5.1 Gut–Liver–Brain Axis

Psychoneuroimmunology confirms constant communication between the gut, liver, and brain (7). Chronic stress activates the HPA axis, increasing cortisol and pro-inflammatory cytokines, which impair hepatic metabolism and contribute to fatty liver disease (8).

5.2 Hepatic Encephalopathy

Hepatic encephalopathy (HE) demonstrates the extreme end of the mind–liver relationship. Elevated ammonia and inflammatory mediators cause irritability, disturbed sleep, confusion, and cognitive decline (3,9).

5.3 Emotional Stress and Liver Function

Chronic stress elevates liver enzymes, disrupts metabolism, and accelerates NAFLD progression (10). Conversely, hepatic inflammation produces cytokines that induce depression, fatigue, and irritability (11). These findings mirror homoeopathic clinical observations (13–15).

6. Conclusion

Mental and emotional symptoms frequently accompany liver pathology, serving as early indicators of internal imbalance. Homoeopathy places central importance on these mental expressions, allowing precise individualisation of remedies. For instance, *Nux vomica* aligns with irritability and overwork; *Sepia* with indifference and exhaustion; *Lycopodium* with anticipatory anxiety and poor confidence (13–15).

Modern psychoneuroimmunology validates these classical homoeopathic observations by demonstrating bidirectional communication between emotional states and hepatic function (7–11). Emotional stress influences liver enzymes and inflammatory pathways, while hepatic inflammation directly affects mood and cognition.

This synthesis of traditional homoeopathic understanding and modern biomedical science highlights the importance of evaluating mental symptoms in diagnosing and managing hepatic disorders. Integrating both perspectives strengthens clinical decision-making and enhances individualised homoeopathic intervention.

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