

## Review Article

## Dealing Shigellosis with Homoeopathy

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**Abstract:** The article discusses about the virulent bacterium *Shigella*, its clinical manifestations, the related epidemiology, treatment options that includes both preventive & curative approaches. It also discusses the supportive therapy. The public health dimension of the *Shigella* bacterium is also dealt with. The article discusses the role that homoeopathic therapeutics can play in the absence of any treatment options to deal with the chronic cases. Homoeopathy can be a supportive therapy that can reduce not only the morbidity but also the fatality of *Shigella* cases due to all the strains. Homoeopathy has repeatedly proved its efficacy in chronic bowel diseases since the last two and half centuries.

**Keywords:** WHO, *Shigella*, Homoeopathy, Dysentery, Microbiology.

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## INTRODUCTION

In late March 2026, the Kerala health department detected Shigellosis & it has continued till June 2026. 132 confirmed cases, 75 probable cases were reported till June 12<sup>th</sup> 2026. Among these, there were 3 deaths of which 2 were U5 children. In Kuttikkattoor, Kozhikode, a 3 year old girl child died & 60 residents (mostly children) fell ill in late March 2026. The outbreak spread to Wayanad, Malappuram & Kannur. In a school in Wayanad, 300 children were hospitalized. There haven't outbreaks in Kerala in 2009, 2020 & 2022 also. As on 18.6.2026, there have been six deaths & 150 confirmed cases [1].

That's how *Shigella* is in focus currently. It has a long history. It was Hippocrates who described the term dysentery for passing of blood & mucus in stool [2]. At the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, epidemics of bacillary dysentery

occurred periodically in Japan. Kiyoshi Shiga explained the dysenteric stools of patients & isolated a bacterium that was agglutinated by serum from convalescent patients but not with acute disease. Later, to honor Shiga, the bacterium was named as *Shigella Dysenteriae* type 1, the first organism of the genus *Shigella*<sup>3</sup>. Later, Flexner, Sonne & Boyd discovered additional groups under the genus *Shigella* [4-6].

### Epidemiology

*Shigella* is a rod shaped bacteria that resemble fat, furry cartoon caterpillars. It is a gram negative contagious bacterium. Shigellosis transmission is mostly through the oro-faecal route when people ingest tiny amounts faecal matter through contaminated food, water or hands. It is so virulent that as low as 10 to 100 bacteria can cause the infection or even an outbreak. Globally, *Shigella* causes 80-165 million infections annually &

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about 600,000 deaths particularly among U5 children in Sub Saharan Africa & South Asia [7-9].

Humans & primates are the primary reservoir of *Shigella*. It has also been isolated from various other sources like aquatic bodies. These are rivers, surface waters, coastal waters, free living amoebae, insects, birds & wild animals. Several aquatic bodies in India show the presence of *Shigella*. Hence, fish is a potential source of infection especially if it is harvested from sewage contaminated water. Ingesting small amounts of contaminated water while swimming or bathing, consumption of crops cultivated in soil/water contaminated by *Shigella* can cause severe infection [7-9].

The incidence of *Shigella* is highest among U5 & increases steadily after the age of 40 years. *Shigella Flexneri* is the most common in India. *Shigella Dysenteriae* temporarily disappeared from Northern & Eastern regions before a decade. It has surged up again [8, 9]. During epidemics caused by *S. Dysenteriae* Type 1, all age groups are affected. In a multi centric study of six Asian countries, no deaths were recorded among 845 patients [11]. The absence of *S. Dysenteriae* Type 1 was the possible reason for low morbidity & mortality. Hence, it is seen that this type is the most virulent type of bacterium among the *Shigella* group [11].

### Clinical Manifestations

Shigellosis is a diarrheal disease that is marked by watery loose stools to severe symptoms such as fever, abdominal cramps, tenesmus & bloody diarrhea. Severity of the disease varies by the infecting species. *S. Dysenteriae* usually cause dysentery which also occurs in *S. Flexneri*, *S. Boydii* & *S. Sonnei* have self limited watery diarrhea [12].

### Shigella & India

Shigellosis epidemics & outbreaks have been reported in India since 1972 till date as in Kerala [13]. All these outbreaks in India have indicated that food & water borne transmission is not uncommon & calls for adequate sanitation action. Currently, the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) & the Water Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH) related efforts are a initiatives in this direction [14].

### Dealing with Shigella

There is a nationwide presence of multi drug resistant *Shigella* developing rapid resistance to most antibiotics available. Hence, judicious use of antibiotics is among the most essential measure to combat Shigellosis. Therefore, a continuous & strong surveillance is needed regarding antibiotic resistance across the country. This will help to get periodic updates of the local antibiograms. This process will help the stakeholders to effectively identify the right antimicrobial drug for use [8, 9].

Mild cases can be dealt only with ORS & Zinc (OZ) therapy. Along with the OZ therapy, severe cases require antibiotics to shorten the duration of illness, reduce the severity & prevent complications [15]. Sulphonamides were the first drug of choice in the 1940s [16].

### Homoeopathic Angle [17-25]

In homoeopathy, there is a medicine prepared from the *Shigella Dysenteriae* bacterium. The medicine is called a nosode in homoeopathy since it is prepared from a bacteria. The name of the medicine is 'Dysentery Compound' & is associated with 'Apprehension' & is commonly known as the 'Heart Nosode'. Since it causes dysentery, it is so named. The medicine not only acts on the Gastro Intestinal (GI) system but also in the mental sphere & the Cardio Vascular System (CVS). It was first proved on human beings (Human Clinical Trial) by Thomas Dishington in 1929 i.e. 11 years before the entry of antibiotics for Shigellosis. As mentioned above, this type is the most virulent & causes epidemics while affecting all age groups.

Nosodes are the group of medicines that are prepared from the disease causing organisms or substances like toxins. The bowel nosodes are a series of remedies made from non-lactose forming bacteria of the human intestinal flora. These medicines were first developed by Dr. Edward Bach (1886-1936) and continued by John Paterson and later by his wife Elizabeth from 1920 to 1964. Dr. Paterson died in 1955 and his wife Elizabeth continued to work till 1964. The basic premise that Dr. Paterson theorized was that 'the bacterium is a concomitant of the pathology and not the cause'.

Homoeopathy has many remedies for dysentery which is a primary feature of Shigellosis. The drugs for Shigellosis are 'Aloes', 'Arsenic', 'Bufo', 'Cantharis', 'Capsicum', 'Carbo Veg', 'Carbo Animalis', 'China', 'Colchicum', 'Coli B', 'Colocynthis', 'Gelsemium', 'Haemamelis', 'Lyssin', 'Mag Carb', 'Merc Sol', 'Merc Cor', 'Nux V', 'Phosphorus', 'Rhus Tox', 'Sulphur'.

Along with these medicines, all forms of management & supportive therapy are crucial so that the case fatalities decrease. These medicines will also prevent complications & other associated disorders of the other systems of the body as well.

## CONCLUSION

As the issues of diarrheal diseases are in the surging mode across the globe, the issues of U5 deaths are also in the surge because of the *Shigella* issues especially in poor nations. It is here that the inclusion of the suggested medicines from the homoeopathic therapeutics will not only benefit the homoeopathic fraternity but also the public at large & especially the poor nations & in cases that are found in India currently like in Kerala.

It is a step towards the achievement of fostering the public health ministry of nations & motivating the personnel associated with the ministry where especially the homoeopathy therapeutic has the capability towards gaining popularity in diarrheal & infectious diseases.

The essential properties of homoeopathic medicines in line with the essential medicines like cost effectiveness, clinical effectiveness and no side effects will only boost the use & popularity of the therapeutics.

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