

# Role of Homoeopathy in Stomach Cancer

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## **Abstract:**

Cancer is a deadliest disease having many facets from its development upto the stage of metastasis. Stomach cancer is the second most common cancer causing cancer deaths having a non-specific symptoms but if it is diagnosed on time can be curable. Homoeopathy can help the patient with stomach cancer in different ways from its evolution where the disease is at a curable state and in its palliation and even in the after-effects of chemotherapy selecting medicine on the similia basis.

**Keywords:** Stomach Cancer, Homoeopathy

**Abbreviations used:** CBC: Complete Blood Count; RBC: Red Blood Cell

## **Introduction:**

Stomach cancer, we are talking about the cancer which is the second most common cause of cancer death worldwide and 95% of stomach cancers are adenocarcinomas.<sup>1,2</sup> The incidence of stomach cancer has been decreased in past 70-80 years and high incidence is found in the Japan and Chile.<sup>2,3</sup> Whatever the type of cancer is, it is required to be detect on time and to do the TNM Staging and then plan the treatment accordingly.

## **Types of Stomach Cancer:**<sup>1</sup>

Stomach cancer can be classified in two ways:

1. On the basis of histology
2. On the basis of morphology

## Types of gastric cancer (on the basis of histology)

Intestinal type	Diffuse
70-80%	20-30%
Resembles intestinal cancers in forming glandular structures.	Poorly differentiated, has signet-ring cells, and lacks glandular formation
Men:Women = 2:1	Affects men and women equally
primarily affects older people (mean age 63 years)	Occurs more commonly in young people
Strongly associated with environmental factors.	Not strongly related to H.pylori infection
Prognosis: good	Prognosis: worse

## Types of gastric cancer (On the basis of morphology)

1) Polypoid or fungating intraluminal masses	2) Ulcerating masses	3) Diffusely spreading (linitis plastica), in which the tumor spreads through the submucosa, resulting in a rigid, atonic stomach with thickened folds (prognosis dismal)	4) Superficially spreading or “early” gastric cancer—confined to the mucosa or submucosa (with or without lymph node metastases) and associated with a favorable prognosis.
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## Risk factors for intestinal gastric cancer: <sup>1</sup>

1. H pylori - Chronic *H pylori* gastritis is the strong risk factor for gastric carcinoma, increasing the relative risk 3.5- to 20-fold and it is estimated to be the risk factor in 60–90% of cases.
2. Pernicious anemia
3. History of partial gastric resection more than 15 years previously
4. Smoking
5. Diets that are high in nitrates or salt and low in vitamin C

## Diffuse Gastric Cancer:

- Most diffuse gastric cancers are attributable to acquired or hereditary mutations in the genes regulating the E-cadherin cell adhesion protein.
- Hereditary diffuse gastric cancer accounts for 1–3% of gastric cancers.
- The cancer may arise at a young age, is often multifocal and infiltrating with signet ring cell histology, and confers poor prognosis.
- Many of these families have a germline mutation of E-cadherin *CDH1*, which is inherited in an autosomal dominant pattern and carries a greater than 60% lifetime risk of gastric cancer. Prophylactic gastrectomy should be considered in patients known to carry this mutation.
- In addition to the hereditary diffuse gastric cancer, there are other hereditary cancer predisposition syndromes that account for 3–5% of gastric cancers. These include:
  - i. Lynch syndrome
  - ii. Juvenile polyposis syndrome
  - iii. Peutz- Jeghers syndrome
  - iv. Familial adenomatous polyposis.

## Location of Stomach Cancer: <sup>1</sup>

Most gastric cancers arise in the body and antrum.

## Clinical features: <sup>1</sup>

- Gastric carcinoma is generally asymptomatic until the disease is quite advanced and when symptomatic, then the symptoms are non specific
- Presenting symptoms in most patients:
  1. Dyspepsia,
  2. Vague epigastric pain,
  3. Anorexia,
  4. Early satiety,
  5. Weight loss.
- Hematemesis or melena can be due to ulcerating lesions while pyloric obstruction can cause postprandial vomiting and progressive dysphagia due to lower oesophageal obstruction.

## Signs of metastasis: <sup>1</sup>

1. Left supraclavicular lymph node (Virchow node),
2. An umbilical nodule (Sister Mary Joseph nodule),
3. Rigid rectal shelf (Blumer shelf),
4. Ovarian metastases (Krukenberg tumor).

## Investigations and their findings in case of stomach cancer: <sup>1</sup>

1. CBC showing decreased Haemoglobin concentration, decreased RBC concentration showing anaemia caused due to chronic blood loss.
2. Liver Function test showing elevation of alkaline phosphatase, may be present if there is metastasis to the liver.
3. Endoscopy with biopsy for histological examination to confirm the diagnosis of stomach cancer.

## Staging is defined according to the TNM system: <sup>1</sup>

Tumor (T)	Nodes (N)	Metastasis (M)
T1: tumors invade the lamina propria or muscularis mucosa (T1a) or submucosa (T1b), T2: invade the muscularis propria, T3: penetrate the subserosal connective tissue, T4: invade serosa or adjacent structures.	N0: if there is no involvement, N1: 1–2 regional nodes, N2: 3–6 regional nodes, N3: if there are involvement of more than 7 regional nodes.	M0 signifies the absence of metastatic disease, M1: distant metastasis

## Homoeopathic medicines with their indications: <sup>3,4,5,6,7,8,9</sup>

- 1) *Cundurango*- Allays the pain in gastralgia accompanying cancer of stomach, chronic gastric catarrh, syphilis and cancer. Ulcerative stage of carcinoma cutis when fissures form. Tumors, stricture of oesophagus. Cancer of stomach, severe pains, vomiting of coffee-ground masses; hard; knobby; large swelling in pylorus, complete loss of appetite, emaciation, cachectic look, constipation.
- 2) *Crotalus horridus*- Cancer of stomach with vomiting of bloody, slimy mucus. Pain in the stomach; coldness as if a piece of ice were in the stomach or in the abdomen. Stomach irritable, unable to retain anything, constantly throws up blood. It has greatly restrained the growth of carcinoma where there is much vomiting of bile and blood. Vomiting in many instances where the blood has no tendency to coagulate. Craving for stimulants.
- 3) *Hydrastis canadensis*- Cancer and cancerous state, before ulcerations, when pain is the principal symptom. Ulcers and cancer of stomach.
- 4) *Ornithogalum umbellatum*- Considered in chronic gastric and other abdominal indurations, possibly cancer of intestinal tract specially of stomach and caecum.
- 5) *Eucalyptus globus*- Malignant disease of stomach with vomiting of blood and sour fluid.

- 6) *Cadmium Sulphuratum*- This remedy is used for cancers especially. Without this remedy it will be very difficult to control malignant vomiting and fevers. It is a great remedy in the gastric irritation of carcinoma, a great palliative; coffee ground vomiting.
- 7) *Conium maculatum*- There are many stomach troubles; ulceration of the stomach; cancer of the stomach. Conium is one of the greatest palliatives in symptoms of the stomach when all the symptoms agree. It will palliate cancerous conditions for a while, then on comes the difficulty again, because when the symptoms are advanced sufficiently to indicate conium many times there is no hope of cure. Cancer of stomach with contractive spasmodic pain extending from pit of stomach into back and shoulders; swelling in pyloric region; hardness of abdomen from swelling of mesenteric glands.
- 8) *Kali bichromium*- It is a very useful remedy in ulceration of the stomach; and when such ulcer is cancerous it relieves the pain, stops the vomiting, makes the patient comfortable for a long time. In other words, it palliates him. There are some pains in the stomach that are ameliorated by eating; nausea sometimes is ameliorated, but such is the exception. He has a faintness in the stomach which drives him to eat often.
- 9) *Kreosote*- Soon after eating there comes a burning pain in the stomach, and then a sense of fullness and an increasing nausea, ending in vomiting of the food, which looks as it did when taken; it looks undigested, but it is sour and acrid, coming up an hour or two after eating. Vomiting, the stomach seems unable to digest, and after the patient empties it there is constant nausea. After a swallow of water a prolonged bitter taste remains in the mouth. There is aggravation from eating cold things and relief from warm diet. In malignant diseases of the stomach when this symptom is present, Kreosote becomes a great palliative; it relieves the burning and improves the digestion for a while, but the trouble comes again. Many times our remedies furnish us the greatest known palliation in cancerous affections. Homoeopathy should at all times furnish a degree of palliation in cancerous and other incurable malignant diseases of the stomach. This palliation will bring more comfort to the stomach than can possibly be brought about by *Morphine*.
- 10) *Actea spicata*- After drinking, shuddering. Sour vomiting. Tearing, darting pain in epigastric region with vomiting. Cancer of the stomach, with characteristic pains, tearing, drawing.
- 11) *Platinum muriaticum*- Stomach cancer, Acidity of stomach with headache. Warmth and heaviness in epigastrium. Nausea and inclination to vomit.
- 12) *Arsenicum album*- Cancer of stomach with burning pain and excessive thirst, desire for acids <from cold drinks and cold diet, > from hot drinks; vomiting of all he takes; terrible sensation of weakness and exhaustion with anxiety in region of stomach.
- 13) *Acetic acid*- Schirrus of pylorus; cancer of stomach, ulcerating gnawing pain at one spot in stomach with agony and depression, preventing sleep, intense and constant

thirst; severe burning pain in stomach and abdomen; vomiting after every meal of yellow, yeast like matter or blood; pale, waxen skin; tongue pale and flabby; marked debility; copious pale urine.

- 14) *Bismuth*- Cancer of stomach with burning, stinging, crampy pains; stomach hangs down to the crest of the illium; hard lumps between navel and edges of lower ribs, right side; vomits only at interval of days when food has filled the stomach, then vomits large quantity of food during whole day; vomits all fluids.
- 15) *Mezereum*- Cancer of the stomach, with burning, corroding pains; great emaciation; the muscles of the face are tensely drawn, like strings; internal surface of the gastric mucous membrane feels raw, with sensation as if food remained for a long time undigested in the stomach; constant vomiting of chocolate-colored mass, with great burning in throat; haematemesis; violent retching, accompanied with the agony of death; sleeplessness and exhaustion; hard lumps in epigastric region; hypochondriasis; constipation.

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