

## The Role of Homeopathy in Oncologic Palliative Care

### 2-Hour Home Study CE

Kate M. O'Dell, PharmD, BCPS and Sachin A. Shah, PharmD, FACC, FAHA

#### Self-Assessment Questions

1. What are the central principles of homeopathy?
  - A. The principles of “like cures like” and “minimum dose” which involve the use of a substance that causes symptoms in a healthy person to treat those with similar symptoms in a sick person at an ultra-diluted dose
  - B. The principles of “opposites attract” which involve the use of a substance that has the opposite mechanism of action to the symptom etiology at a “maximum dose” to treat those symptoms with the highest efficacy dose
  - C. The principles of using the highest dose of a chemical compound to treat the condition as quickly as possible
  - D. The principles of “broad spectrum” which involve the use of multiple substances to completely eradicate the condition as quickly as possible
2. Which symptom is most likely to be treated with *Calendula officinalis*?
  - A. Nausea or vomiting
  - B. Anticipatory anxiety
  - C. Wound healing
  - D. Musculoskeletal pain
3. Which symptoms are most likely to be treated with *Arnica montana*?
  - A. Muscle soreness and bruising
  - B. Anxiety and depression
  - C. Insomnia and sleep disturbance
  - D. Nausea and vomiting
4. Which homeopathic medicines exert actions to cause similar sensations?
  - A. *Apis mellifica* and *Cantharis vesicatoria*
  - B. *Arnica montana* and *Nux vomica*
  - C. *Bellis perennis* and *Atropa belladonna*
  - D. *Calendula officinalis* and *Gelsemium sempervirens*

The next two questions pertain to the following patient scenario:

5. A 30-year-old female with a history of breast cancer and has received her first round of radiotherapy. The patient presents with skin erythema, moist and peeling skin, and moderate edema at the radiotherapy site. In addition to her conventional topical treatments (e.g. corticosteroids and barrier creams), which homeopathic medicine has clinical data to support its use as complementary therapy for radiodermatitis in cancer patients undergoing radiotherapy?
- A. *Arnica montana*
  - B. *Calendula officinalis*
  - C. *Bellis perennis*
  - D. *Nux vomica*
6. The patient was advised to use *Calendula officinalis* over the treated areas. What should she expect from using this homeopathic medicine?
- A. Decreased risk in developing acute dermatitis RTOG grade 2 or higher
  - B. Increased feeling of pain and skin burns
  - C. Increased risk in developing acute dermatitis RTOG grade 2 or higher
  - D. No measurable effects of acute radiodermatitis
7. Which homeopathic medicines have clinical data to support their use in reducing seroma formation post-surgical mastectomy and breast reconstruction?
- A. *Arnica montana* and *Bellis perennis*
  - B. *Apis mellifica* and *Gelsemium sempervirens*
  - C. *Arsenicum album* and *Nux vomica*
  - D. *Calendula officinalis* and *Atropa belladonna*
8. A 50-year-old patient who is currently undergoing chemotherapy enters the clinic with complaints of feeling angry, irritable, and aggressive particularly in the morning after waking up. The patient also complains about heightened sensitivity to morning light and certain smells. He believes it started shortly after beginning his chemotherapy and noticed improvements in his behavior in the evening. The patient is seeking a homeopathic medicine to complement his current conventional antiemetic drug regimen. Which homeopathic medicine is best suited for this patient based on the reported symptoms?
- A. *Calendula officinalis*
  - B. *Arnica montana*
  - C. *Nux vomica*
  - D. *Arsenicum album*

9. A 45-year-old cancer patient who has undergone several rounds of chemotherapy and radiotherapy presents with signs of skin erythema and dryness, along with complaints of fatigue and weight loss. She notes that she is constantly cold and has to wear a sweater all the time, even when it is summer weather. The only food and beverages that she can consume seem to be hot soups and hot teas to help keep her warm. She states that she is seeking additional alternative and complementary therapies to her current conventional prescribed medications to help improve her quality of life. Given her presenting symptoms, which of the following homeopathic medicines may help with her current condition?
- A. *Arnica montana*
  - B. *Arsenicum album*
  - C. *Bellis perennis*
  - D. *Nux vomica*
10. A 47-year-old male undergoing chemotherapy presents to the clinic with feelings of nervousness and difficulty sleeping. He feels especially anxious and stressed before going into clinic to receive his chemotherapy. He mentions that his symptoms worsen if he learns about bad news. The patient states that he wants to use alternative and complementary therapies to help improve his quality of life. Based on his presentation, which agent may be suited to manage his symptoms?
- A. *Atropa belladonna*
  - B. *Nux vomica*
  - C. *Gelsemium sempervirens*
  - D. *Calendula officinalis*