

Antiviral activity of Engystol®: an *in vitro* analysis

By Oberbaum M, Glatthaar-Saalmüller B, Stolt P, Weiser M.
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ABSTRACT

Objectives: To study the effects of the homeopathic preparation Engystol (Biologische Heilmittel HEEL GmbH, Baden-Baden, Germany) on a panel of human pathogenic viruses *in vitro*.

Design: The effects of Engystol were studied using plaque-reduction assays and virus titration assays, and by quantification of newly synthesized viral proteins in virus-specific enzyme-linked immunoabsorbent assays (ELISAs).

Subjects: The DNA viruses Adeno 5 and herpes simplex type 1 (HSV-1), the RNA virus respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), and human rhinovirus (HRV)

Results: A 73% reduction of Adeno 5 specific proteins and an 80% reduction in HSV-1 specific proteins were observed in ELISAs of virus-infected cells treated with Engystol after infection. The effects appeared to be dose-dependent. With these viruses, similar results were observed in titration assays of viral offspring from cells treated with Engystol. Pretreatment of adenovirus with Engystol did not inhibit the infectivity of the virus suspension and no Engystol-induced stimulation of interferon- α could be observed. Plaque-reduction assays with the RNA viruses, RSV and HRV, showed reductions in infectivity by 37% (RSV) and 20% (HRV), respectively.

Conclusions: The results indicate antiviral activity of Engystol independent of the activation of the cellular interferon system.

A complex homeopathic preparation for the symptomatic treatment of upper respiratory infections associated with the common cold: an observational study

By Schmiedel V and Klein P.
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ABSTRACT

Background: The use of complementary medicines is large and growing in both the United States and Europe.

Objective: To compare the effects of a complex homeopathic preparation (Engystol; Heel GmbH, Baden-Baden, Germany) with those of conventional therapies with antihistamines, antitussives, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs on upper respiratory symptoms of the common cold in a setting closely related to everyday clinical practice.

Design: Nonrandomized, observational study over a treatment period of maximally two weeks.

Setting: Eighty-five general and homeopathic practices in Germany.

Participants: Three hundred ninety-seven patients with upper respiratory symptoms of the common cold.

Interventions: Engystol-based therapy or common over-the-counter treatments for the common cold. Patients receiving this homeopathic treatment were allowed other short-term medications, but long-term use of analgesics, antibiotics and anti-inflammatory agents was not permitted. Patients were allowed non-pharmacological therapies such as vitamins, thermotherapies and others.

Main outcome measures: The effects of treatment were evaluated on the variables fatigue, sensation of illness, chill/tremor, aching joints, overall severity of illness, sum of all clinical variables, temperature and time to symptomatic improvement.

Results: Both treatment regimens provided significant symptomatic relief, and the homeopathic treatment was noninferior in a noninferiority analysis. Significantly more patients ($P < 0.05$) using Engystol-based therapy reported improvement within 3 days (77.1% vs. 61.7% for the control group). No adverse events were reported in any of the treatment groups.

Conclusion: This homeopathic treatment may be a useful component of an integrated symptomatic therapy for the common cold in patients and practitioners choosing an integrative approach to medical care.