



Iron Deficiency Anaemia—National Alert & Scope of Homoeopathy

Since 1997, the Dr M L Dhawale Memorial Trust has been working in a tribal belt of Thane District near Manor, about 100 Km from Mumbai, situated at the foot of a range of hills, having small villages comprising of small padas of 30-40 houses each. Transportation is the main hindrance to reach here, as they are 3-5 km from the nearest main road, access path being of mud and stone. The nearest medical service is 10-15 km away. The Trust has been visiting these places thrice a week to render clinical services. During these visits it was suggested that a general Health-check be conducted assess the health status. Thus a Health camp was conducted along with estimation of Hb levels. The reports received were shocking. It showed that 80%-90% of the population was Anaemic with values ranging from 7-10 gm/dl with some even below 7 gm/dl!

PROJECT PLAN:

Anaemia, we know, is not a primary disease but a manifestation of some underlying disease or nutritional deficiency. An important contributing factor for Anaemia is prevailing illiteracy and socio-cultural influences that include the idea of health, less importance to health maintenances till it incapacitates the individual; availability of 'Bhagats', poor economic condition and lack of proper hygiene and cleanliness. All these act upon individuals and hamper their living at all levels-emotional, physical and intellectual. Unless all these factors are taken into consideration, the health status will never improve.



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It was virtually impossible to deal with the whole community at all these levels. MLD trust, therefore decided to take a small group of people, who would be easily available and were the Centre of the community. The choice naturally fell on school going children in age group of 4-12 years. They would also be a good media to communicate to the elderly group about health. Finally two padas- Sheel and Pandhare pada were selected.

PRELIMINARY PREPARATION:

First the ground plan and help had to be organized: Village Sarpanch was involved to motivate people and select few as community health workers to carry out the survey & preliminary information. It worked well with his co-operation. A series of community meetings were held to bring about awareness of health and its importance at all levels. People were also explained about specialized demands of Homoeopathic system in terms of history taking.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION:

A Special Case Record was designed for this purpose. It focused mainly on the causes and Paediatric aspect. A camp conducted during which the selected group (120 children) was examined by a well-known pediatrician from Mumbai. He helped us understand the clinical status of each child. Simultaneously our team of Homoeopathic doctors carried out detailed case taking of each child and then decided their constitutional remedy. Yes, we did face some difficulty with case taking like: Why craving & aversion? Why mentals? What do you mean by asking behaviour? And so on! But these difficulties were well tackled with help of our Community Health Workers (CHWs) & our concept of disease. It was seen that, chronic suppurative otitis media, recurrent skin infections mainly Pyoderma, Sca-



bies with superadded infection and Recurrent Upper Respiratory Tract Infections were the most prevalent disease conditions. Treatment was started immediately with the constitutional approach. It required our skill of observation, our knowledge of medicine, remedy-relationship in order to manage the acutes. Also our skills of communicating to those shy & uncommunicative children were tested as parents would not be available to us in each follow up due to their work schedule.

Next we had to deal with their Nutritional status & Hygiene. This was necessary, otherwise their improvement would be short lived and positive health could not be maintained. Their poor economic condition did not allow them to buy good food in adequate amount. So we started with food distribution to these children. This food would be of high nutritive value & easily available in that area eg jaggery, groundnut, bananas etc. Children were taught to keep themselves clean, wash hands before eating, be neat and wear clean clothes. They were even taught songs on cleanliness & education, exercises and games. Weekly prizes were given on each count. These proved to be of great encouragement to them.

TREATMENT PLAN:

Constitutional remedy was given to all the selected children, whether they had complaints or not. All acutes were dealt with acute remedies. Relationship of remedies was helpful to come to some conclusions, especially when children were not able to give data & parents also were not available. Intercurrent were used when needed.

ANALYSIS AVAILABLE:

Our claim that Homoeopathy builds up resistance and increases susceptibility to fight illness was clearly vindicated in the follow ups. A second camp was conducted after 1 year to assess their state & their Hb level.

In just 1 year of Rx, the recurrence of colds and skin

infection and ear discharges had decreased. The number of scabies cases which would be around 50-60 had come down to about 8-10 cases only. The general impact on children: no more flowing noses, no more dirty hands, no more diseased looks. The observation of the paediatrician also confirmed that the appearances and general health status of these children have improved. Now, they look healthy. This conclusion was seconded by their Hb levels which showed a rise by 2-3 gm/dl. The amount of acute fever, which accompanied every rainy season decreased. The attendance in school improved, the school teacher also commented that performances in school have improved. Two more investigation at 6 monthly intervals showed a successive increase in Hb levels. We can thus proudly say that we have been able not only to bring about change in their anaemic state, but have touched their lives!

STATISTICS:

Reports show that the Hb levels have gone above 10 gm/dl. in about 95% of children in period of 1 year. In comparative study about 70% of children have shown increase in Hb levels in same season in 2 consecutive years.

CONCLUSION:

Anaemia is a multi factorial disease, where nutrition, hygiene and individual health status all contribute to its manifestation.

Homoeopathy has a role to play in correcting anaemia by increasing the capacity of assimilation.

Homoeopathy helps to build up the susceptibility of an individual to fight against the disease agent.

Improvement in resistance leads to better health status.

Health is not mere disappearances of symptoms & sign, but improvement at all levels i.e. – mental, physical & intellectual level.

[Editor: This interesting general write up will be concluded in the next issue with 5 cases of anaemia with varying approaches.]

