

Homoeopathy and Asthma

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Asthma is a most distressing diseases, to suffer or to witness and a difficult one to deal. One authority says "genuine asthma is but rarely completely get rid off": ie true bronchial or spasmodic asthma. If the disease is established in middle life, structural changes of a permanent character ensue. In Homoeopathy, asthma is one of the most satisfactory diseases to treat, as the cases readily respond to the Homoeopathic remedy. Another reason that I think asthma is so satisfactory to treat Homeopathically (but might not perhaps appeal to every one) is that it exemplifies more than most diseases, the truth of the principle of homoeopathy, that each case of diseases must be treated on its merits and the medicine must not be given because the disease is asthma. In other words, pre-eminently treat the patient and not the disease. I have found that nearly every case of this disease needs a different remedy. Each case of asthma is worked out on the basis of generals, mental and peculiar symptoms. In my experience, only rarely one will have to go beyond the polycrests for a cure. I have only occasionally used "specifics" e.g. *Sambucus*, *Lobelia*, *Quebrach*, when normal remedies fail. Even allopaths recognize the importance of treating each case of asthma on its own individual merits, but being without a law to guide, they have to try each remedy for asthma, in turn until per chance they hit on the correct one. The following extracts from allopathic text books show their attitude towards the treatment of asthma. The physician must find out what is most suitable to the case: one form of medicine benefits one patient, another form the other.

In the use of antispasmodics, we must avoid

judging the effects of one from the failure of another of the same class; but in difficult cases we must try each in succession for it often happens that the successful remedy is arrived at only after repeated trials. So much for treatment based on chance as compared to that based on law. As is the case in most diseases, the medicines that the allopaths have come to regard as specifics for asthma have some thing of Homoeopathicity about them, *Potassium-iodide*, which is given in most text books as one of the first drugs to try. It has these symptoms recorded in "Herrings Guiding Symptoms" – no air enters the lungs face livid; oppression of breathing, patient awaking in the morning hours; asthma in young people.

Arsenic, another allopathic standby, has of course homeopathically many asthmatic symptoms. All asthmatic patients have at some time or other sought relief in some of the many "asthma cures" which are in the form of cigarettes or a powder or paper to burn. These usually contain nitrate or chlorate of potash and are often very efficacious in relieving the asthmatic spasm. *Kali-chlor*. I do not think has been proved Homoeopathically, but *Kali-nit*. has undoubtedly symptoms resembling asthma in its provings; distressing dyspnoea, cannot lie with head low; wants to be fanned to keep from suffocating. So it may be these "asthma cures" containing potassium nitrate is of real and lasting benefit, it may quite well be due to its homoeopathic action. While on the subject of these "asthma cures" I should like to ask the opinion of other members as to whether in their experience the use of these palliatives by patients undergoing homoeopathic treatment for their

asthma at all interferes with successful result? One can hardly forbid patients seeking relief till we are able to effect a cure. It is even a question whether the exhaustion caused by these palliative measures is not more prejudicial to the patient's power of response to homoeopathic medicine than if he is allowed to seek the relief that he knows he can get from these patent remedies. Asthma is one of the most difficult conditions to treat even Homoeopathically, as evidenced by the numerous research projects initiated in various homoeopathic institutions. But so far no concrete guidelines which could benefit the profession, have emerged from these studies. Homoeopathic trials are completely different trials from those conducted in London some years ago like *Rhus-tox* in arthritis. These are valueless. Dr KUMTA discusses this bane of homoeopathic research.

Certainly two groups can be made - 1) control group and 2) treated group (as this will use the % age of cases which improve) but here the similarity ends. Each treated case needs to be evaluated with attention to the evolutionary aspect as is illustrated well in Dr KISHORE MEHTA'S case. Dr LATA JAGGAR emphasizes the importance of the underlying miasmatic condition in selection of the remedy.

Asthma is of 2 types extrinsic (with a family history). Unlike extrinsic asthma, cure in intrinsic asthma may not be easy but control of symptoms by homoeopathy is definitely much better than in any other system of medicine, as homoeopathy takes into account the mentals, the miasmatic and family history. The personality of the typical asthmatic is hypersensitive and obsessive with strong dependent traits.

Bronchial asthma commonly affects children and here the danger is that parents, in trying to protect the child and in dealing with their own anxieties may;

1. Impair the mature personality development of the child - *Baryta-carb*, *Calcarea*.
2. Give over attention which can restrict or

- retard their natural freedom - *Staphysagria*
3. Convey to them their own worst fears and accede to their every request. This may teach the child to use breathlessness for his own gain and remedies like *Ignatia* and *Moschus* may come in or
4. Parents can transfer their own frustrations on the child...as in Meena Mankani's excellent case of *Cicuta*

Fortunately her case came in a moderate attack and the administration of the constitutional allowed no further severe attacks to emerge. But caution must be exercised in using constitutional remedies in very severe acute attacks.

Breathing is not only essential for our body but is also a pleasant exercise. Difficulty in breathing makes life miserable. Bronchial asthma is one such culprit for such difficulty. Bronchial asthma may be intrinsic or extrinsic. In both types the mucous membrane and muscle layers of the bronchi become thickened and the mucus glands enlarge. This also happens during status asthmaticus. The lungs become hyper inflated and in rare cases death can occur,

Causes

- ♦ Hypersensitivity to foreign protein or particles eg pollen grains, dust mites, animal danger, fungi, etc
- ♦ A history of infantile eczema or food allergies is another common cause.
- ♦ Use of drugs like aspirin, cortico steroids, penicillin are also responsible in some cases of dyspnoea.
- ♦ Exertion, emotions and infections are other causes of attack, disease is one of the biggest enemies of mankind for which people resort to drugs and subsequently face its side effects, thus the process goes on without interruption to overcome these problems. Homoeopathy plays a very important role.

Emotion may modify the immunological or allergic mechanism responsible for some cases of asthma. Emotional phenomena may also be related to the development of asthma by means of central nervous system control of bronchiolar



junction. A combination of both these processes in varying proportions occurs in most cases. A number of studies have suggested a relationship between asthma and a cyclothymic or hysterical personality. A number of specific conflicts have been reported as leading to bronchial asthma. Much of the emphasis on the psychological genesis of asthma has been concerned with the view that the significant psychodynamic process in asthma is the unconscious fear of loss of the mother or mother figure. Sexual temptations, competitive feelings, narcissistic desires and hostile impulses may precede asthmatic attacks. Behavior of fantasies with such themes become sources of tension to the asthmatic because they stimulate fears of retaliatory withdrawal or estrangement from a parental figure. The dependency observed in asthmatics may be secondary to the disease process.

The asthmatic attack itself could give rise to an acute need to cling to a mother figure and may therefore tend to reinforce the helpless dependency seen in these patients. Worse damp weather & worse change of weather.

HOMOEOPATHIC TREATMENT

As to the homoeopathic treatment of asthma: The time of the paroxysm is nearly always regular and definite and the time modality is one of the most important modalities. For instance there is the aggravation just after midnight of *Arsenic* the 3 am of *Kali-carb*, the 4 am of *Nux-vom* etc then we must take the other modalities, pertaining to the paroxysms eg whether eating relieves or aggravates; the effect of heat and cold etc. Only do not attach any importance to modalities peculiar to the disease eg relief from sitting up in bed. They have no value at all in finding the remedy. Then notice the accompaniments of the paroxysm eg intense anxiety, fear of death but do not lay stress on such a symptom unless it is very well marked, as anxiety is a normal feature of the asthmatic seizure. Finally take note of other rare and peculiar symptoms. If necessary, examine the past history and family history, enquiring about

suppressed eruptions or sweats and bad vaccination and asking if there is phthisis in the family. When the remedy is found give it in single dose and don't be in a hurry to repeat. I will now give a few illustrative cases showing the need for different remedies

CASES TREATED:

CASE 1

Mrs S aged 72 yrs. Could obtain only very few symptoms from her. Asthma was worse in the early morning, about 3 or 4 am, worse after food. Worse from the least draught, though the dyspnoea continued day and night. Patient herself was very sensitive to the cold. These symptoms, though few are definite *Nux-vom* - 200 every three hours till next day.

She had a very bad night, so received no more medicine. Next day she said that she was better in 3 days whereas she usually takes 6 weeks after such an attack. She continued to improve for a fortnight, when *Nux* was repeated (it is not a long acting remedy) and she was soon able to be out again. (*Ed: In my experience Nux-vom will require a deep acting constitutional and antimiasmatic to complete the cure.*)

CASE 2

Miss J aged 40 yrs. Has taken much treatment for nasal polyps and antrum disease. She woke with cough < 1 - 4 am. She was a chilly patient. Worked out by Tyler's repertory cards: *Ars*, *Lyco*, *Phos* and *Puls* came out. Very right sided - lead to *Lyco*, I gave that remedy - with very little result. Looking over the case again obtained a few more symptoms worse especially from 12 - 1 am, worse talking, worse eating, relieved by warm drinks. *Arsenic-Alb* was given to her.

She began to improve at once. *Ars* of course is right sided remedy as well as *Lyco*, but may say here that I have since learned not lay too much stress on the side of the body affected. *Ars* in higher and higher potencies kept this patient improving the last dose being a 50M. Since then I have not heard from her, so I conclude that she has improved. In another case presenting the typical generals and mentals of *Lycopodium*,

this remedy proved to be the correct one and going up the potencies – the last being the 10M – she remained free from asthma.

CASE 3

Mrs G aged 32 yrs had asthma and bronchitis for years. Worse in the night or early morning (no definite time) worse in damp or hot weather, better in cold (east wind suits her well) patient is worse from heat, though she feels the cold more now than formerly. Takes cold very easily, worse in spring and autumn.

She looked like *Sepia* as she was worse from consolation but I was wrong, going more on the aggravation from heat and on the indefinite time

of the attacks and in fact on the paucity of any definite deciding symptoms I thought of *Sulphur*. I gave *Sulphur* 200; she began to improve at once and continues so under the same remedy in ascending potencies – receiving the last time 1000 M, she is improving in general health – taking cold less often,

I may say here that in asthma the first indicated remedy appears to continue to act longer – with out needing to be changed – than in most diseases.

One can raise the potency until the highest is reached, then begin again at the bottom of the series.

The Voyage marred with Summer Complaints

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The summer vacation has started. The members of the Materia Medica Society decided, that since the schools will remain close for nearly two months, lets go for an excursion to the outskirts of the city. *Mr Repertory*, the secretary of the society was given the responsibility of taking care and acting as a guide to the various locations.

The members met at the pre-decided location to board the vehicle. *Mr Repertory* was aggrieved to see the state of affairs of his beloved souls. *Staphysagria* could hardly walk on account of severe sciatica. This nervous lady somehow couldn't get leave from her office but she was determined to go for the pleasure trip. Her boss had reprimanded her in front of everyone and had asked her not to bunk the office and go for the trip. She could not retaliate and felt insulted. Significantly, her sciatica in summer alternated with croup in winter. The dizzy, drowsy, dull and trembling *Gelsemium* suffered from summer coryza, but he was apathetic towards his illness. *Chionanthus* was perturbed and could not

understand why he suffered from jaundice in summer with arrest of menses. *Kali-bichromicum* the short necked fellow had the trademark bottle of beer in his hands. He was scratching his body which was full of eruptions which itched in summer. The forgetful *Guaiacum*, who had unclear odor emanating from him, complained of abdominal pain during this season. *Lycopodium* was reluctant to come to the jaunt for fear of being given responsibility. He complained of burning like coals of fire between the scapulas. *Vespa*, the wasp had similar complaints like *Lycopodium* but the burning were in the soles. *Psorinum*, the perennially chilly character was hopeless and had despair of recovery. She was very sensitive to cold even in hot and humid climate like summer; she was seen covered with blanket in this hot season. *Ant-Crud*, the sentimental personality fainted from the heat of summer.

The scenario made *Mr Repertory* cry and he did not lose time in taking the appointment of a well-known Homoeopath of the town.