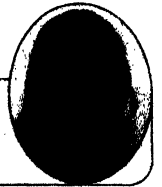


Monsoon Ailments: Care & Cure by Homoeopathy

ABSTRACT: *Homoeopathy could do much in the acute monsoon related ailments- both as curative and preventive, if accorded the chance to do so. I have detailed various ailments and their briefs along with indicated Homoeopathic remedies.*

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Two people died on Friday the 16th of July, 09, taking the death toll, due to rain-related ailments this season, to 40 in 48 days. The toll for July itself was 18, averaging a death a day till today in Mumbai due to monsoon-related diseases.

A 11-year-old boy from Boricha Marg and a 17-year-old man from Goregaon died within hours of being admitted to Kasturba and KEM Hospitals respectively.

Among the patients admitted to the civic hospitals for monsoon-related ailments, maximum cases are of fever with around 248 patients in 24 hospitals. Moreover, there has been a rise in cases of Gastro-enteritis (138) and Malaria (62) along with Leptospirosis (2) and Dengue (1).

Civic officials have warned citizens to not ignore any kind of fever and get a medical check-up and blood tests done immediately. The BMC health officials, however, said that though the number of rain-related ailments is rising steadily, the situation is under control. "As compared to last year, there are not as many deaths. No city has zero mortality rate and rain-related ailments persist during monsoons," Municipal Commissioner, Jairaj Pathak. (Indian

Express, 18/7/2009).

This news came to me as a shock. We as Homoeopaths claim so much for our pathy regarding its prophylactic cure and as per 2nd Aphorism, in 6th Edition of Organon of Homoeopathy. Where are we over here? Homoeopaths should be given duties in BMC and an opportunity to give a rational healing to our brothers and sisters and make a sincere effort in minimizing monsoon ailments.

However, 39 deaths were reported due to monsoon-related diseases last year till July, while 40 deaths have already been reported this year in July 09 so far. Nearly 10,021 cases of such diseases have been reported this year as compared to 10,081 cases last year in the same period. The cases of fever this year is 5,971

as compared to 6,026 last year in the same period; followed by gastro-enteritis with 2,103 cases this year and 2,124 last year. There were 1,853 malaria cases this year against 1,557 last year.

To address the large number of vector-borne diseases during monsoon, the civic administration has procured drugs amounting to Rs 1.5 crore and kits worth Rs 5 lakh for investigation. What provision we have for drugs



which can be used for the monsoon related diseases?

This month, there have been 1,764 cases of fever, 609 cases of gastroenteritis, seven cases of leptospirosis, four cases of dengue and 213 cases of malaria.

The civic administration has already identified vulnerable areas which are prone to monsoon related diseases and has accordingly trained its staff. It has also co-ordinated with NGOs, Indian Medical Associations and other Doctors' bodies. The rainy season, which ranges from June to September every year in most parts of our country, can be a period of great hopes and of greater despair. The monsoon brings with it an entirely new set of issues which leaves the common man, the doctors and the authorities, in deep water, literally and figuratively.

MONSOON OR RAINY SEASON IMPLIES: Wet wind from south east direction, damp cold climate and stagnant water in pits of road or unused utensils. Monsoon is always a season of epidemics, since the moisture and humidity in the atmosphere and the water logging are very conducive for bacteria, viruses and parasites to flourish. All age groups are affected during this season, but the brunt usually falls on the very young and the very old - the two age groups who have a lower level of immunity and susceptibility.

Here is a look at the top four common problems in the rainy season:

VIRAL FEVERS

Viral fevers occur in almost every season, but are maximally found in the rains. These viral fevers can be mild or severe - depending on the virulence of the virus [which changes every year] and the individual immunity of the person. Most of these fevers last for 3-7 days. While there is no specific treatment for viral fevers, its management usually includes fever-reducing medicines, plenty of fluids, a balanced diet.

For sudden bursts of viral fevers, Homoeopathy can help a lot. Remedies like *Aconite*, *Gelsemium*, *Pulsatilla*, *Belladonna* etc help to relieve the flu like symptoms. *Gelsemium* can act as a preventive for

flu when going out in sun in monsoon. Viral infections can be avoided especially in children by keeping them warm, not entering AC with damp hair and clothes, avoiding playing in muddied puddles. After they drain in rain, dry them thoroughly and give them something warm to drink like soup.

Fungal infections that affect the foot can be avoided by wearing dry gumboots while going out in rain. Keep your feet absolutely dry. Avoid walking bare feet, also to prevent diseases like leptospirosis, which is a rat-urine born disease. Increased foot care becomes important for Diabetics. For fungal infections, Homoeopathic medicines like *Allium-cepa*, *Tellurium*, *Petroleum*, etc- work the best.

COUGHS AND COLDS

Coughs and colds too have become an ongoing phenomena but tend to intensify during the rains. Dripping or blocked noses, dry coughs and wet coughs keep children and adults awake the entire night, ably aided by the pollution in the cities. Treatment mostly involves cough and cold syrups, warm water gargles, steam inhalation. In cases where the cold or cough persists for a long period, investigations like X-ray or blood tests may be required, to rule out chest infections.

GASTRO-INTESTINAL INFECTIONS

Till the advent of water purifiers, mineral water and common knowledge that boiling water can cut down diseases, most hospitals used to be full of patients suffering from stomach infections during the rainy season. Though these have lessened today, they still are a major problem, many a times requiring hospitalisation and intravenous therapy. And the more dangerous cousin of stomach infections - gastroenteritis - rears its ugly head on and off. Prevention and treatment involves sticking to boiled or filtered water, and eating clean, hot food and in avoiding eating out, especially from the roadside. If anyone comes down with stomach infections, plenty of rest and fluid replacements such as water, juices and soups are required. A severe

attack of the disease may need hospitalisation. Gastric ailments like gastritis, gastroenteritis and jaundice are the nastiest troubles in monsoon. They can be prevented by drinking boiled water, eating freshly cooked food and avoiding roadside food. Boiling water for 10 minutes after it starts boiling is essential and the most effective way to fight the spores. Prefer bottled water when eating outside, that too of reputed companies. Change in drinking water is the commonest cause of gastro-intestinal tract infections in monsoon. Here Homoeopathic remedies like *Zingiber*, *Natrum-sulph*, *Arsenic-album*, etc come to our rescue.

ALLERGIES

Allergic manifestations, mainly due to the proliferation of insects like mosquitoes, ticks, fleas, mites, spiders, cockroaches and lice are common in the monsoons. Also, moist and humid climates are favourable for the growth of many fungi and moulds - all of which can give rise to allergic manifestations of the skin, nose, eyes, and stomach and air passages.

General guidelines

The guidelines for avoiding most of the monsoon related diseases include:

1. Avoid eating at unhygienic places and roadside stalls
2. Drink only boiled, filtered or mineral water
3. Undergo vaccination against typhoid and jaundice
4. Do not let water stagnate around your dwellings, as mosquitoes breed in these waters
5. Ensure that the underground and overhead water tanks are disinfected and cleaned before and after the monsoon
6. Consult your doctor, if have fever for more than three days
7. Take care while eating raw and uncooked food like salads, juices. *Ed: I wash my own vegetables every week with solution of potassium permanganate.*
8. Washing and disinfecting one's hands frequently help in preventing a lot of

infections

9. Avoid eating at places which are crowded, or where mass cooking goes on. Food poisonings [gastroenteritis] is common in the rainy seasons when people eat out at marriages or religious gatherings.
10. Keep your house and surroundings as dry and clean as possible.

Other complaints like Hepatitis, Malaria, Dengue, Rhinitis, Pharyngitis and Aggravation of Gout also flares up during monsoon.

Gout: Results from deposition of microcrystals of sodium urate monohydrate or uric acid from hyperuricemic body fluids. Uric acid is the end product of purine metabolism in human who lack enzyme uricase. It may be precipitated by trauma, unusual physical exercise, severe systemic illness, use of diuretics. Commonly affect the men aged 30-70 years usually monoarticular, metatarso-phalangeal joint of great toe 70 %. Affected joint may be hot, red and swollen with shiny overlying skin and is extremely painful and tender.

DIAGNOSIS is supported by:

1. Raised serum uric acid level.
2. Radiological changes: soft tissue swelling with patchy calcification, cortical erosion of phalanges, punched out erosions.
3. Demonstration of needle shaped negatively birefringent crystals of monosodium urate in synovial fluid by polarising light.

REMEDIES

- *Bryonia*: Pains < on slightest motion, > pressure and warmth. Inflammations of joints which are hot and swollen, patient feel chilly. Weariness and heaviness. Sudden pain in great toe. Cracking in hip joint when walking.
- *Ledum-pal*: Deposits of chalk stones in finger joint, wrist and toe. Inflammation of joints. Chilly and yet pain relief with cold application.
- *Colchicum*: Swelling of joints, albumin in urine which becomes black like ink, scanty urine with dropsical swelling < motion,

touch, > warmth and rest.

- *Dulcamara*: Pain from getting cold and wet. Stiffness, numbness and aching sensation.
- *Guaiaecum*: Gout engrafted, sore swollen joints more painful from warmth and motion. Shooting pain from feet to knees. > Cold application.
- *Formica-ruta*: Gouty pain due to urate, albumin in urine. < Motion, cold or before storm. > Pressure.
- *Salicylic-acid*: Articular pains esp. elbow and knee joints with great swelling redness of joint. Acute and piercing pain > heat < cold

HEPATITIS

“Hepa” means liver and “itis” means inflammation.

Common cause is viral infection with hepatitis A virus, B virus, in addition to it C,D,E and G. Out of that hepatitis A virus (HAV) is more commonly spread with faecal oral route which is the one of the major water borne diseases. Mostly outbreaks occur in Rainy season. Poor standard of hygiene and sanitation facilitate the spread of HAV in high endemic areas.

HAV is enterovirus of picornoviridae family which multiply only in hepatocyte.

Diagnosis is supported by:

1. Specific viral antigen in faeces.
2. Rise of anti HAV titre
3. Igm antibody to HAV in serum detection

REMEDIES

- *Chelidonium*: Tenderness of liver on pressure. Pain under the inferior angle of shoulder with bitter taste in mouth. Yellowness of conjunctivae, Brown red urine and clay colored stools.
- *Chionanthus*: Rumbling, soreness and gripping pain in abdomen. Urine contains traces of bile and sugar. Constipation clay coloured stools.
- *Cardus-mar*: Jaundice like symptom and pain move from right hypochondriac region to left hypochondriac.
- *Natrum-sulph*: Enlarged liver, soreness in

region of liver. Bad taste in mouth. Thirst and desire for something cold ice. Rumbling and gurgling in bowels then sudden sputtering stools. Cannot bear tight clothing around the waist.

- *Lycopodium*: Region of liver distended <after eating esp upper abdomen. Sore, pressive, bruised pain in the region of liver. Dropsy due to hepatic disease. Craving for sweets, Dryness of mouth without thirst.

Prophalactic remedies: *China-officinalis*, *Kali-muriaticum*, *Nux-vomica*.

TYPHOID

Disease is clinically characterised by a typical continuous fever for 3 to 4 weeks, relative bradycardia with involvement of lymphoid tissues and considerable constitutional symptom. Typhoid fever is endemic in India: 653580 cases every year and 417 deaths occur every year.

Primary source of infection are faeces & urine the secondary sources are contaminated water, food, fingers and flies.

REMEDIES:

- *Baptisia*: Great muscular soreness, indescribable sick feeling. All secretion are offensive. *Bapt* in low dilution produce a form of antibodies to bacilli. Typhus’s viz, agglutin. Bed feels too hard on account of soreness of muscles. Thinks he is broken or doubles up and tosses about in bed trying to get pieces together.
- *Gelsemium*: Acute catarrhal enteritis during damp weather. Tenderness in right iliac fossa during typhus. Soreness in abdominal walls. Stool painless or involuntary, cream coloured stools. Cramps in stomach < riding or sitting erect.
- *Cuprum-metallicum*: Typhoid fever with unconsciousness, loss of pulse, suppression of urine, tympanic abdomen, great prostration and nervous excitability.
- *Acid-phos*: Prostration and weakness

following typhoid fever.

PROPHYLACTIC AND CURATIVE REMEDIES: *Baptisia, Bryonia-alba, Hyoscyamus, Typhoidinum.*

MALARIA

Malaria is a protozoal disease caused by infection with parasite of genus *plasmodium* & transmitted to man by certain species of infected female Anopheline mosquito. Malaria remains a serious health problem in south East Asia. Region with nearly 290 million people estimated to be at high risk. India accounts for 77% of regional total while 54% of all deaths are reported from Myanmar. Malaria is a seasonal disease, maximum prevalence is from July to November and optimum temperature which is required for its production is 20-30 degree Celsius. Relative humidity of 60% considered necessary for mosquito to live their normal span of life. Rain in general provides opportunities for the breeding of mosquitoes and may give rise to epidemics of malarias.

Clinically it is characterised by lassitude, headache, nausea and chilly sensation followed by rigors. Temperature rises rapidly to 39-41 degree Celsius, severe headache often accompanied by vomiting followed by hot stage in which skin is hot and dry to touch, pulse is full & rapid respiration. Fever comes down with profuse sweating.

Diagnosis is supported by:

Demonstration of malarial parasite in the blood.

REMEDIES:

- *China*: Sphere of action: Head. Has chill without thirst during first two stages. Thirst commences about the end of second stage when fever starts declining in other word, there is thirst before and after the chill. Symptom worse after every 3rd day and attack is preceded by nausea and accompanied by agitation, palpitation, headache and feeling of hunger.
- *Chininum-sulph*: Paroxysm comes at 10 or 11 am or 3 and 10 pm. Shaking chill with

thirst is present in both stages i.e. heat & sweat stages. Sweat is exhausting and long lasting.

- *Gelsemium*: When chills run up the spine. Headache in nape of neck. Chill in the middle of the day with Dullness, Dizziness and Drowsiness. No thirst with heat.
- *Cedron*: Fever returning at clock wise periodicity with headache.
- *Ferrum-arsenic*: Malarial fever with hepatosplenomegaly.

PROPHALACTIC REMEDIES: *Arsenic-album, Chininum-arsenicum, Chininum-sulph, China, Eupatorium-perfoliatum, Gelsemium, Cinchona Officinalis, Natrum-muriaticum, Sulphur, Terebinth.*

DENGUE

Dengue viruses are arboviruses capable of infecting humans and causing disease. *Aedes aegypti* is main vector. Onset is sudden with chills and high fever, intense headache, muscle and joint pain which prevent all movement. Retro-orbital pain, photophobia, anorexia, altered taste sensation, colicky pain. Rash may be diffuse flushing, mottling or fleeting pin point eruption on face, neck and chest that may be maculopapular or scarlatiniform on 3rd or 4th day.

REMEDIES:

- *Bryonia*: Pain all the body, but not deep in bones. Wants to lie quietly. Thirst for large quantity of water at long intervals.
- *Eupatorium-perforliatum*: Break-bone fever, pain goes deep into bones. Vomiting and restlessness.
- *Rhus-tox*: Dengue fever with much more muscular pain.

PROPHALACTIC REMEDIES: *Eupatorium-perfoliatum*- single dose following a dose of *Tub-b* as the indicated anti-miasmatic

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...Few More Monsoon Ailments

Abstract: Dr Suvarna is a regular author of NJH. In this article she has described common conditions of monsoon ailments. We have retained only those not detailed by others. But we request Cases from her vast practice to add to our learning - Editor

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When it rains, it pours, or to be more precise, it pours bacteria, viruses and other kinds of organisms for whom foul weather means a field day. As the general level of contamination rises, so do incidence of food and water-borne diseases.

BACILLARY DYSENTRY

CAUSE: Shigella group of gram -ve bacilli

SPREAD: Like gastroenteritis

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS: 3 to 12 or more loose stools per day which gradually lessen. Mucus in stools, occasional pain in abdomen, vomiting sometimes, fever is rare

Is it contagious/infectious?: Yes eg gastroenteritis

TREATMENT: Self care measures - plenty of water or ORS (1 glass water with juice of 1 lemon + 1/2 tsf salt + 2 tsf sugar). Treat symptomatically with Hom remedies: *Aloe-soc, Arsenic-alb, Merc-sol, Mer-cor, Nux-vomica, Sulphur.*

AMOEBC DYSENTRY

CAUSES: Entamoeba histolytica

SPREAD: Like gastroenteritis

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS: 1-5 semisolid stools a day, occasionally watery, mucus present in stools and occasionally blood. Severe abdominal cramps which precede motions, sour belching, bloating of stomach and flatulence, some times constipation. It is contagious and infectious.

TREATMENT: Homoeo Medicines according to symptoms, hot or cold water bottles for abdominal pain, drink plenty of water, if there are many stools, maintain bland diet. Symptomatically with

Homoeopathic remedies: *Aloe-soc, Arsenicum-alb, Merc-sol, Merc-cor, Nux-vomica, Sulphur.*

CHOLERA

CAUSE: Vibrio cholerae

SPREAD: Epidemics due to contamination of drinking water supply with sewage in the monsoon or after flooding of rivers.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS: Abrupt onset of watery, painless diarrhoea (rice water stools) and vomiting several times a day, sometimes countless stools, cramps in leg muscles due to depletion of potassium. Severe dehydration with wrinkling of skin and fever - low to moderate.

HOMOEOPATHIC REMEDIES: *Aethusa, Ars-album, Ver-album,*

ORS or electral powder to treat dehydration.

VIRAL HEPATITIS

CAUSES: The virus of hepatitis A (HAV)/E (HEV)

SPREAD: As in gastroenteritis the fecal contamination of food. Occurs in epidemics too.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS: In both forms: pre-jaundice phase-bodyache, malaise, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, especially after eating fried foods, lasts 1-2 weeks. Jaundice phase-yellow skin, eyes and urine, pale, clay like stools, low grade fever, itching over body, enlarged and tender liver. Post jaundice stage lasts 1-4 months.

Contagious/infectious?: Yes.

TREATMENT: Bed rest not always needed, but activities should be restricted, high calorie, low fat diet, plenty of glucose and fruit juices. Symptomatic treatment with indicated Homoeopathic remedy.