

# The Diabetic Cardiac Patient

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Summary: Diabetes mellitus is a very prevalent disease worldwide with significant cardiac complications. The author presents a few homeopathic remedies that coincide with both diabetes and cardiac conditions.

Keywords: Diabetes mellitus, heart disease

Worldwide, the incidence of diabetes mellitus is rising, and the risk of heart disease is prevalent in people suffering from diabetes mellitus. Seventy percent of diabetics die from large blood vessel diseases, mainly myocardial infarction (MI) and stroke.

Diabetes mellitus is a clinical syndrome characterized by hyperglycemia due to absolute or relative deficiency of insulin. The classical symptoms are thirst, hunger, polyuria, nocturia and gradual weight loss. Rapid weight loss occurs particularly in Type 1 (Insulin-Dependent Diabetes Mellitus). Type II (Non-Insulin-Dependant Diabetes Mellitus) may be asymptomatic. The prevalence of both varieties differ considerably in different parts of the world mainly due to genetic and environmental factors.<sup>1</sup>

Years of poorly controlled hyperglycemia may lead to primary vascular complications that affect small and/or large vessels. Unfortunately, intensive control of plasma glucose alone is not an effective preventive measure.<sup>2</sup>

Complications that arise in patients with diabetes often correlate with the duration of the diabetic state. In patients with type I diabetes, end-stage renal disease is a major cause of death, whereas patients with type II diabetes are more likely to die from macrovascular diseases such as MI and strokes.<sup>3</sup>

## Treatment

The aim of treatment is to control hyperglycemia, improve the state of health and prevent complications. Medical treatment has gone a long way to develop drugs that can control hyperglycemia, hypercholesterolemia, and all other complications that can arise from Diabetes mellitus. Unfortunately, a patient who has developed such complications will have to take treatment for hyperglycemia and for each of the respective complications with the possibility of suffering side-effects from each of the prescribed drugs.

It is possible to select one homeopathic remedy which can favourably affect both the primary condition of diabetes and its complications. Such a remedy must display symptoms consistent with the diabetes as well as the sec-

ondary condition, and possibly a third condition as well. The homeopathic remedies that are discussed in this article display such symptom combinations.

## The Remedies<sup>4</sup>

### *Crataegus oxycantha*

*Crataegus* is said to have a solvent power upon crustaceous and calcareous deposits on arteries. In its pathogenesis it has extreme dyspnea and palpitations on least exertion and pains in the region of the heart and under the left clavicle. Irregular pulse, irregular heart beat and irregular breathing. It is also indicated for diabetes, especially in children.

### *Phaseolus*

According to Boericke, the heart symptoms of *Phaseolus* are quite pronounced and it is also indicated in diabetes. There is rapid pulse, fearful palpitations and a feeling that death is approaching. The pulse is weak with a sick feeling about the heart.

### *Arsenicum album*

*Arsenicum* is characterized by unquenchable thirst for small quantities of water at very short intervals. There is a corresponding frequency of urination, especially at night. The patient experiences a feeling of weakness after urinating.

Debility, exhaustion, restlessness and anxiety are additional features that will point in the direction of the remedy should there be doubt on the choice.

The cardiac features of *Arsenicum album* are also characteristic. There are palpitations, cardiac pain, dyspnea and faintness. The palpitations are violent, aggravated lying on the back, especially at night. Cardiac pain radiates to the neck and to occiput.

Dyspnea is aggravated at midnight or towards the morning. It is accompanied by exhaustion, which has been described as being "out of proportion to the physical con-

dition.”

Additionally, the lower extremities are swollen, with pitting on pressure, although the skin tends to thicken and may have a black discoloration or be afflicted with ulcers. There is burning in the feet which feels better by heat.

### **Phosphorus**

In *Phosphorus* the diabetes is due to pancreatic disease. The patient experiences sudden and extreme dryness of the mouth, thirst for very cold water which is vomited as soon as it gets warm in the stomach. There are violent palpitations with anxiety, aggravated by lying on the left side. The patient also experiences burning in the region of the heart. Precordial pain, worse from stress, and worse lying on the left side.

### **Natrum muriaticum**

*Natrum muriaticum* corresponds to heart disease and the development of diabetes consequent to chronic grief. The *Natrum muriaticum* subject has silent grief. He/she is withdrawn from society, suppresses all emotions, and eventually develops all kinds of mental and physical conditions. These subjects are depressed to the point of attempting suicide.

Among their symptoms, they have an unquenchable thirst for cold drinks. They eat well, yet loose weight.

They have a feeling of constriction in the heart and chest. Sensation of coldness in the heart. Palpitations at night, worse lying on the left side. Chronic heart disease. Craving for salt. Edema of the extremities as a result of sodium retention.

### **Iodum**

The *Iodum* patient has a lot of thirst and is hungry; he eats a lot but loses weight. He has great debility, the slightest effort inducing perspiration. He urinates frequently; the urine is copious and has a dark yellow-green color.

Lilienthal says it is indicated for valvular affections following endocarditis. Violent palpitations worse from the least exertion. Sensation as if the heart were squeezed together.

### **Comments**

From the above discussion it is evident that the diabetic patient is at risk of developing complications, including heart disease. While medical treatment is available to control hyperglycemia, this does not prevent possible com-

plications. This issue presents a challenge to the homoeopathic prescriber. There are two questions that arise from the discussion:

- Would the indicated remedy be curative if the diabetic patient consulted a homoeopathic physician at the very onset of the complaint?
- Would the indicated remedy also prevent cardiac complication?

A research project designed to explore these questions would prove most interesting.

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