

Editorial for October 2007

Psycho-somatic Illness and Homoeopathy

Psychosomatic disorders are commonly referred as psychosomatic illness. It is an illness whose symptoms are caused by mental processes of the sufferer rather than immediate physiological causes. If a medical examination can find no physical or organic cause or if an illness appears to result from emotional conditions such as anger, anxiety, depression or guilt then it might be classified as psychosomatic.

History: Sigmoid Freud famously studied psychosomatic illnesses which informed his theory of the unconscious mind and repression. Many unidentifiable illnesses have previously been labeled as hysterical or psychosomatic for eg. Asthma, allergy, false pregnancy and migraines. Some illnesses are under debate including multiple chemical sensitivity, gulf war syndrome and chronic fatigue syndrome.

Treatment: Various types of psychotherapy and alternative therapies are used to treat psychosomatic disorders. In some cases psychosomatic problems may improve or disappear following suggestion by recognized authority. Allopathic treatment is typically using liberal use of anti-anxiety medication, anti-depression medication and in conjunction with some therapy.

In homoeopathy we base our prescription on what we call constitutional symptoms where we give lot of importance to the mental symptom as well as to the characteristic physical symptom. Hence every prescription from a Homoeopathic physician will surely include an element of psychosomatic angle. It is beyond the scope of this editorial to mention all the remedies of Materia Medica which has the scope for the treatment of psychosomatic disorders. I would rather like to take example of three important members of the Solanaceae family namely Belladonna, Hyosamus and Stramonium. I will try to find out what are their individual roles in treatment of psychosomatic illnesses.

The reason why I have selected Solanaceae family is because it has a very important action on the mental state.

Belladonna: it is a remedy which is chiefly indicated when there is wilderness, restlessness with a mania to cut or tear the clothing. The patient springs out of the bed and strikes those around him. He appears

frightened and sees objects when he closes his eyes. Speech and action is hasty. It thus becomes a valuable remedy in acute mania. In fact the highest form of mania is seen here with great determination of blood to the head, hyperesthesia of senses, wild eyes and dilated pupils.

Years back I had an occasion opportunity to treat a paranoid schizophrenic with above state in homoeopathic hospital very successfully relived without the use of allopathic drugs, only with the help of Bell C.M. few drops every 3 hourly..

Such patients may even bark like dog, are most violent and pugnacious. Violence is characteristic of this remedy. Great noisiness, the patient swings, screams and curses. Delusions of every conceivable variety may be present. Infact it suites well to those people who are what is known as stout with plethoric constitution. The melancholy of Belladonna is exceedingly depressed, fearful and subjected to violent attacks of weeping. Most of the Belladonna patients that I have treated successfully have got a sort of a psychic ability. Why I mentioned this is because many Belladonna patient develops lot of delirious hallucination of spirits of angels and demons. A person who is constitutionally Belladonna is extremely prone to visions, hallucinations and psychic phenomena. Most of the Belladonna patients that I have treated so far constitutionally are all males fortunately or unfortunately and these males are very assertive and fiery type like Sulphur.

As Kent rightly mentions in his lectures, Belladonna patient develops symptoms which are very active and never passive. With all these fiery people, violence is a very key feature of their mental state. They usually are quite open and warm hearted people. Sometimes they have a very explosive temper. They may bottle their anger for a very long time. Even a sane person from time to time might explode and do damage.

In an acute mania one should think of Belladonna when the patient has got lot of visual and auditory hallucination. Here it comes very close to another remedy Anacardium and Stramonium. Another very important concomitant symptom which I have confirmed repeatedly in my practice in Belladonna is that they laugh very boisterously, they laugh quite loudly.

What is the effect of the anger, the excitement on the physical body? The physical body will develop either epileptic type of symptoms or twitching or jerking, they may develop migraine or spasms anywhere in the body. Usually the symptoms are right sided and in general the patient is

extremely hot. Patient is usually worse when exposed to sun, noise, jar and in company.

In head they may be having hammering or throbbing headache worse by motion and better bending the head backwards. They may also have a very psychosomatic vertigo which is worse stooping and rising from stooping position.

In Gastrointestinal tract they may have a dry mouth, red tongue, chewing motion of mouth, dryness of throat and strong desire for lemons or lemonades. Great thirst for cold water but vomits everything that has been eaten and hence severe dread of drinking. Spasmodic hiccough with sweat. Pain in the stomach extending all the way to the shoulder and throat. There can be distension of abdomen with cramp and colic as if a hand had clutched some part of abdomen.

No other remedy is more frequently indicated and a frequent mistake made here is administering lower potency in acute instead the higher potencies always act much better and promptly.

Hyoscyamus: In this remedy you will also see lot of excitation. They usually imagine that they are pursued by some demons and that someone is trying to take their lives. He runs away from imaginary enemies, is talkative almost like Lachesis and jumps from one subject to another. The face is very slightly flushed as compared to violent congestion of Belladonna. He may see ghost and demon but the mania of Hyoscyamus is almost non-inflammatory.

The patient may act silly and idiotic or lascivious and lewd. They may throw their bed clothes off and make lewd and ridiculous gestures. In proving of Hyoscyamus some provers persisted in stripping themselves and uncovering their genitals and this makes Hyoscyamus an extremely good remedy for nymphomania. Also extremely good remedy for bad effects of extreme jealousy, fright and disappointment in love. A sort of depression is very characteristic of Hyoscyamus with debility and prostration where questions are answered slowly or irrelevantly.

In my practice I sometimes have a tough time differentiating Lachesis from Hyoscyamus because the loquacity, the hurriedness, the paranoia, the jealousy and the sexual obsession is a key feature of Hyoscyamus in both psychotic and pre-psychotic individual. The patient will enjoy talking in a totally unconscious manner about his or her sexual life. They

may either boast about how they enjoy their sexuality or how much they relish the long list of sexual encounters.

Kent mentions about the suspiciousness, fear of being poisoned, imagines being abused as one of the most important symptoms of paranoia in his practice. This I have been able to verify innumerable times. In Hyoscyamus patient feeling of jealousy can be so powerful that it totally dominates the life of the patient and their partner. The characteristic thing of their morbid jealousy is it tends to be accompanied by rage.

At the level of physical body they can develop symptoms like convulsions, epilepsy, spasms, hysterical paralysis and chorea. Most of the symptoms are worse with emotions, before and during menses. Constantly staring at the surrounding objects is one very important concomitant at the physical level I have seen. They have a pale; flushed face and make ridiculous gestures or grimaces. Impaired or loss of speech from fright is another very important thing I have seen grinding of teeth, hiccoughs of nursing children, strong aversion to water, severe colic as if the abdomen will burst, dry hacking spasmodic cough from a dry spot in larynx worse at night and while lying down, Nervous wakeful sleep; falls asleep while answering, laughs during sleep. The above were some of the symptoms which I was able to confirm repeatedly in my practice.

In my practice Hyoscyamus is extremely difficult to differentiate from Veratrum album which it resembles so closely. Majority of the people who are at present in the mental asylum, if you study their case history most of them deserved Hyoscyamus at a certain stage of their life.

Stramonium: This remedy like the two preceding members of the same family has mania and is wild and is most terrifyingly filled with hallucinations. The person sees rats, mice, snakes approaching him and he retires in terror.

He is also loquacious; becomes religious, praises, laughs, talks foolishly and tries to escape. Again he becomes satanic and has outburst of violence with ideas of persecution. It corresponds well too many phases of erotic mania, nymphomania and mania of masturbation. The key of its symptomatology is terror. There is also mania of light and company. Hallucination of hearing, hears music and man talking in foreign languages. The symptoms are changeable, full of joy and then full of rage, proud and then dull.

One of the helpful differentiating features between Stramonium, Belladonna and Hyoscyamus is the fear of darkness.

Stramonium individual is subjected to all manner of terrors, delusions and hallucinations and they usually dread the night because it is then that they become haunted by the horror of their own subconscious mind. They usually will tell u “Doctor, how I will be able to sleep all through out the night? or “how will I be able to bear this sunset because it heralds the beginning of dark time.”

Stramonium children often have extreme fear of dark and will not go into an unlit room; they will see monsters in the dark. Adult Stramonium are more prone then any other constitutional types to see faces, creatures and illusionary people.

Kent mentions in the repertory that they see animals, ghost, angles, and departed spirits. In their rage Stramonium patients can scream, hit, bite and there is no holding back. The rage is quite insane and is accompanied by definite desire to maim or kill in many cases. Stramonium patients are extremely prone to hearing voices and these voices are often quite consistent and have a personality of their own. All the psychotic people can hear voices. The voices that usually talk to Stramonium patients sometimes give orders or advice, other times mock or abuse.

At the physical level usually they have lot of neurological problems like twitching, convulsions, trembling, Parkinson, nervous tremors and catalepsy.

Most of the pathologies of Stramonium if you see is because of Ailments from being abused, after anger, from fright, grief, reproaches and mortification.

Always worse when they are in contact with glistening objects like mirror, surface of the water, or in a darkness. They are always worse in light and company. They jerk their head from pillow and drop it again during unconsciousness. With headaches they have a tendency to speak incoherently. Headache usually comes from sun. The nose is red, bloated and hot. Lips are dried and glued together. Tongue has got fine red dots, dribbling of viscid saliva and they constantly spit the saliva. They can have obstinate hiccoughs with great desire for lemon juice which

ameliorates. Cough with jerking of lower limbs. Spine is extremely sensitive.

So friends these are the three examples of remedies which have a huge psychosomatic dimension in their proving. Lots can be said regarding this chapter but the space reconstrains me writing more on this subject.

Wishing you a very happy reading. Bye, Bye.