

Editorial for the month of December 2009

Homoeopathic Management of Headache

A headache is pain or discomfort in the head, scalp, or neck. Serious causes of headaches are extremely rare. Most people with headaches can feel much better by making lifestyle changes, learning ways to relax, and occasionally by taking medications.

Causes

The most common headaches are probably caused by tight, contracted muscles in the shoulders, neck, scalp, and jaw. These are called tension headaches. They are often related to stress, depression, or anxiety. Overworking, not getting enough sleep, missing meals, and using alcohol or psychotropic drugs can make one more susceptible to them. Headaches can be triggered by chocolate, cheese, and monosodium glutamate (MSG). People who drink caffeine can have headaches when they don't get their usual daily amount.

Other common causes include:

- Holding your head in one position for a long time, like at a computer, microscope, or typewriter
- Poor sleep position
- Overexerting yourself
- Clenching or grinding your teeth

Tension headaches tend to be on both sides of your head. They often start at the back of your head and spread forward. The pain may feel dull or squeezing, like a tight band or vice. Your shoulders, neck, or jaw may feel tight and sore. The pain is usually persistent, but does not get worse with activity.

Migraine headaches are severe headaches that usually occur with other symptoms such as visual disturbances or nausea. The pain may be described as throbbing, pounding, or pulsating. It tends to begin on one side of your head, although it may spread to both sides. You may have an "aura" (a group of warning symptoms

that start before your headache). The pain usually gets worse as you try to move around.

Other types of headaches:

- Cluster headaches are sharp, extremely painful headaches that tend to occur several times per day for months and then go away for a similar period. They are far less common.
- Sinus headaches cause pain in the front of your head and face. They are due to inflammation in the sinus passages that lie behind the cheeks, nose, and eyes. The pain tends to be worse when you bend forward and when you first wake up in the morning. Postnasal drip, sore throat, and nasal discharge usually occur with these headaches.

Headaches may occur if you have a cold, the flu, fever, or premenstrual syndrome.

If you are over age 50 and are experiencing headaches for the first time, a condition called temporal arteritis may prove to be the cause. Symptoms of this condition include impaired vision and pain aggravated by chewing. There is a risk of becoming blind with this condition. Therefore, it must be treated by your doctor right away.

Rare causes of headache include:

- Brain aneurysm -- a weakening of the wall of a blood vessel that can rupture and bleed into the brain
- Brain tumor
- Stroke or TIA
- Brain infection like meningitis or encephalitis

I shall be discussing few of headaches that I was able to cure in my practice.

Case 1:

This is a case of a man who was a known case of Parkinsonism and was constitutionally on the remedy Causticum, he complained to me about headache which was there for the past 3 months. The constitutional remedy was unable to tackle the symptoms of his headache however his Parkinsonism was much better with the Causticum. The most important symptom was the pain from forehead just above the eyes extends to the spine or pain starts in the cervical spine and extends to occiput, vertex or to frontal region.

There was also pressing, heavy pain in and around forehead and eyelids. The eyelids sometimes closed in voluntary. The whole phenomenon was aggravated by motion, exertion, walking, and stooping. The pain in the cervical region was the most characteristic especially going all the way down to the spine.

I tried many remedies like Bryonia, Gelsemium, Nux vomica but it gave no relief to the patient. The pain sometime was so violent that he had to take 1 pain killer 3 times a day, and then also the pain will only reduce by 50-60 % but will not leave the person completely.

I was looking for a remedy which had a marked action on the brain as he was suffering from Parkinsonism at the same time having sphere of action on the cervical spine.

I took the rubrics:

- Head pain pressing
- Head pain violent
- Head pain neuralgic
- Head pain motion agg

- Head heaviness
- Eyes heaviness lids

With these symptoms I gave her a remedy **Oreodaphne californica 30c**. Oreodaphne californica is a mountain laurel, it is also known as balm of heaven. It is one of the useful remedy for migraines when fronto-occipital area is affected. Dr. J. Murray Moore proved the remedy on himself and on his friends by taking the tincture of the leaves and immediately they suffered from fronto-occipital headache which was worse from movement and better by rest.



After using this remedy on few patients this remedy became a favorite remedy in my practice for cervical spondylosis and for headache due to hypertension.

Oreodaphne comes very close to another remedy **Picric acid**. Picric acid has got pressing type of pain, pain that extends all the way to the cervical spine and it also has fronto-occipital headache.

Another remedy which comes close to Oreodaphne is **Onosmodium virginianum**. Onosmodium virginianum also has got fronto-occipital headache with a pressing type of pain and the heaviness.

CASE 2:

This is a case of a woman who was a company secretary in a multinational company; she came to me with premenopausal complaints and migraine. With Sepia she felt much better, most of her symptoms get completely ameliorated but after few months Sepia stopped working. Then I again retook the history she now mentioned to me that her boss with whom she worked was too demanding on her and as a result she always remained in an excited state, when she goes home at the end of the day she feels tired, sad and depressed. On weekends when she has a holiday she develops a peculiar neuralgia of the head which begins in the cervical spine goes up all the way to occiput, vertex and frontal region and ends up just above the right eye. The pain is accompanied by nausea. It's a sort of bursting sensation as if there is a lot of pressure within the head and this pressure is going to blow the head.

Any mental or physical exertion, any pressure, jerks, or jars would surely aggravate the pain. It was a sharp shooting neuralgic pain, but here again the area was occipito-frontal and area just above the right eye. She complains that her eyes during the neuralgia feels quite distended. During the neuralgia she also complained of nausea. In general she was constipated, stools were hard and dry, she had a past history of recurrent urinary tract infection.

I tried to repertorize the case and selected a remedy **Prunus spinosa 30C**. The remedy removed most of the symptoms within the first week and later on next few weeks all the symptoms disappeared.

Prunus spinosa as you know comes from the rosaceae family; it is useful remedy for disease of the eyes e.g. herpes, migraine and for urinary problems. The most unique thing that I have seen in my 30 years of practice is the type of pressing pain. It is like pain which presses out or shoots out from the place that this originates. E.g. If there is a pain in the nose, ears or teeth, the patient feels as if the nose will come out of the socket, the ears will come out of the socket, the teeth will come out of the socket. There is a sense of shooting pain within out. The pain occurring in

and around the eyes have led me use this remedy very successfully; successful in glaucoma, retinitis and iridocyclitis.

A very interesting symptom I learnt when I read the case of Dr. Adolf Lippe and that symptom is 'breath always seems to remain sticking in the pit of the stomach', this symptom with pain as if sprain in left ankle led Dr. Adolf Lippe to make a remarkable cure in this case. A young lady 16 years old jumped from the carriage whilst the horse was running away and sprained her ankle. Left ankle and foot much swollen, as the swelling abated breathing became rapid, great oppression with constant desire to take long breath; felt as if the air inhaled did not reach the pit of the stomach, and till she could force air so far down had to yawn and try to take deep inspiration.

Another very good use of this remedy is the herpetic neuralgia because this remedy has got marked stitching and stinging pain in and around the intercostal region.



penis and then returns causing the urethra.

In old people I have seen that the pressure of flatulence on the urinary bladder produces severe cramps in the bladder and the patient is obliged to double up. In old people with enlarged prostate the person is impelled to pass urine immediately because the urine comes all the way to the tip of the glans

CASE 3:

This was a case of an elderly man who suffered from multi infarct dementia and was under my care. I had prescribed him Opium very successfully for his dementia but since last few months he complained of a migraine; when I examined his blood pressure it was 140/90 but what I observed was that his renal parameter was gradually deteriorating, his creatinine had reached to 1.6 and his albumin in the urine was +1.

Even though he was an old person he still had a strong desire for sex in fact in his past he has enjoyed sex quite excessively. He was very anxious and nervous about his future; he can easily become confused in a crowd or where many people are there in the room talking; he was a greedy person, he would not like to spend money very easily even though he is quite affording. And he had a marked irritability with the headache; the head pain was more of a constriction around the forehead area and heaviness around the occipital area. As soon as he lies down the headache comes or as soon as he reads the newspaper or magazine or takes part in the intellectual discussion the headache comes. Any noise irritates him; and his headache is worse in a warm room.

I was more worried about his high creatinine level and this kind of typical headache which he had never experienced in the past. I used to regularly examine his urine and on few occasions I found out that even he is passing little sediments in the urine, the urine is dark. Based on these symptoms I prescribed him **Zincum picricum**. Zincum picricum I have found out is a very useful remedy for those people who have headache and a high creatinine level and this kind of mental symptoms of his greedy nature, his fears his anxiety and his confusion with strong desire for sex. These are very useful indications for the remedy Zincum picricum, giving Zincum picricum repeatedly brought down his creatinine level back to normal along with complete disappearance of his head symptoms.

Zincum picricum is one of the known remedies for the chronic occipital headaches; as soon as the person lies down or puts his head on the pillow typical headache starts; it's a dull heavy type of headache. In some people the headache can also come after sexual excess.