

Editorial for the month Jan 2009

Homoeopathic treatment of the elderly.....SOME CASES.

Old age can sometimes become a curse for a human being. In my clinic the following are the illnesses commonly encountered in old age arthritis, cancer, blood pressure, ischemic heart disease, cerebro vascular heart disease, depression, diabetes, falls and injuries, hearing impairment, memory impairment, nutritional problems, osteoporosis, Parkinson's disease, respiratory disease, bed sores, insomnia, prostate problem, bladder problem and visual impairment.

From all these the 10 most commonest seen in my practice is hypertension, cataract, osteoarthritis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, ischemic heart disease, diabetes, benign prostatic hypertrophy, dyspepsia, constipation and depression. Let me present few cases from the above diagnosis to justify this editorial.

My first case is of an elderly gentleman who was diagnosed as post-traumatic cerebral hematoma. The history was that he was travelling from BEST bus and due to the sudden break by the driver of the bus his head bang into the body of the bus. It was a blunt injury, it was not a serious injury and a man completely forgets what has happened to him. Only to realize that after four days he observed that he has become little dull and there is mild headache. His wife and children also noticed that along with the dullness there is sleepiness.

The doctor is not consulted but they attribute this problem due to his chronic ill health as he was suffering from diabetes and hypertension for past many years. He measures his blood pressure in the house which is normally in the range of 130/90 mm of Hg. and hence he just takes a tablet Crocin thinking that it is nothing but the simple headache. Within 48 hours his dullness increases and now along with dullness the relatives observed that he is irritable especially when spoken to.

The headache becomes little more severe and he could not keep his eyes open, he wanted to sleep all the time and he becomes more irritable if somebody will disturb him. Any jar or any noise will aggravate his headache and the headache necessitates him to lie down constantly. This was the time when a doctor is called and he advises the relatives to shift him to the hospital and show him to a neurologist. The relatives were not very keen and hence they called me to see him.

I examined him and asked for the CT-scan which shows a large cerebral hematoma on his right temporal region measuring about 4.5x2.5 inches. He had a mild cerebral atrophy and some vascular infarct all over the brain. When I examined him I saw that his eyes were discolored red, the eyelids were semi closed, the pupils were mildly contracted, his hearing were not so sharp, his expression was little anxious and sleepy. When I examined his tongue it was dry, his speech was normal but he preferred to speak less, his fluid as well as the solid intake had reduced in the past one week. And since past few days he did not passed stool.

When I asked the relatives characteristic of perspiration they mentioned to me that they never saw him perspire at all but on touching his skin the skin was cold to touch. The relatives also informed me that ever since the doctor advised him to get admitted in the hospital he was frightened because he never wanted to get himself admitted to the hospital and since that day he has become duller and sleepier. I based my prescription on the above indication and selected Gelsemium. I gave Gelsemium 1M 5 cup method one tea spoonful every few hours.

Within 5 weeks the cerebral hematoma was dissolved to almost one fourth the size, the patient felt much better, his responses were much more active. In the end of three months he was back on the road doing his normal job.

Another acute case I remember there was an elderly gentleman who presented to me with the acute angina pectoris attack. It's a very interesting story, The person has his own family business of share market, but because of his old age his children are now managing the show most of the

time. He prefers sitting in the house and keeps the overall knowledge of what is happening in his business.

Since a past few months there was a slump in the business and the business was not doing very fine as a result he was indirectly worried about the future of the business and during that period one fine day he suddenly complains of the pain in heart which radiates to the left forearm with the numbness of the fingers. This pain was worse if he was anxious or if he was worried, it was worse if he lies on his painful side, it may come with any motion but it may also come if he is at rest also. Sometimes with the pain he will perspires, and when he will perspires the pain becomes much more severe.

He was mildly hypertensive; and was on tablet Envas which he used to take religiously. These attacks of angina are more toward evening or in the night. When the pain was severe the expression of his face was pinched, his tongue was discolored yellow especially more towards the base. He was basically very anxious and nervous person and his wife and children mentioned that even though he does not work in the office actively but any stress and strain of the office definitely affects him.

His basic personality is that he is a coward individual; he usually avoids going in a very crowded places. Basis on the above facts I prescribed him Rhus tox 1M for his acute angina attack. I did not give him any medicine for vasodilatation of the coronary arteries, and then I asked him to take more frequently during the attack he should take 3 times a day from the fifth cup. Within seven days he was angina free. I advised angiography after the attack which revealed about 80% block in the left coronary and about 60% block in the right coronary. I referred him to a cardiologist who opinioned that looking at his age it is better that we treat him conservatively. And hence I continued treating him for the next five years with homoeopathy with practically no or hardly an attack of angina pectoris.

Another case is of an elderly gentleman who suffers from a chronic prostatic induration for a very long time. He is a known diabetic and hypertensive. He comes to my clinic with an acute urinary problem. He

complains that there is a , burning pain during urination in the bladder, whenever he tries to pass urine it always comes in drops. His sonography shows lot of retention post void in the bladder (190ml), while passing the urine it is extremely painful to him. He constantly feels that there is some part of the urine always remaining in the urethra and urging to urine is constant. Even after passing the urine he has an urge immediately, in the night he has to wake up at least 5-6 times and during the day he passes at least 12-14 times urine. He is extremely tired of going for urine repeatedly as this disturbs his sleep and also makes him weak.

His routine urine shows that there is presence of gravel and white sediments, there was about 5-10 pus cells, the weight of his prostate gland was 45 gms. in sonography.

He was a known smoker and he suffered from a smoker's cough and sometimes he will spit out lot of sticky expectoration which was white in colour. He complained of weakness in the legs and he said that he cannot walk more neither he can stand more for sometimes. In the night he was sleepless but during the day he is quite sleepy. His pulse was weak.

I found no other peculiar mental symptoms which I can prescribe on. But for his age he said that he is quite active he never wanted to waste his time, always trying to occupy his time in some creative activity. With this indication I prescribed him *Eryngium aquaticum* 30, one tea spoonful 3 times a day for 15 days.

Eryngium aquaticum is an excellent remedy in my practice for urinary disorders. It belongs to Umbellifereae family. I learnt about this remedy from Margret Tyler 'Pointers to common remedies'. Margret Tyler always used to stress on this symptom 'must urinate every 5 minutes' and urine dripping down all the time and it burns like fire. These are the 3 leading indication of this remedy. Another indication which Margret Tyler has mentioned in her book is severe constipation; the stool is extremely dry and very hard.
