

LUMBAGO

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A pain in the lumbar region is often complained of at this time in the year when the garden needs our attention—in this country, anyway. Digging and planting is in full swing, and the sun is quite warm, making the task a pleasant one. But the wind is still keen and often the gardener becomes overheated, leans on his spade for a few minutes, the cold wind blows and next morning—he cannot move!

Lumbago is intensely painful and often attacks the patient suddenly. Sometimes the first that is felt is when he bends down to attend to the fire or pick up something from the floor—a violent pain strikes across the bottom of the back and the poor man just cannot straighten up. He hangs on to anything that is there and gradually returns to an upright position—frightened to move again lest the same thing happens.

Frequently sitting is then the most comfortable position and I have known several people spend two or three nights and days in an armchair waiting for the pain to wear off in order that they can return to their normal duties.

Allopathic medicine has little to offer except the usual pain killers, the patient can certainly get a little sleep but these do nothing to cure the condition and some people feel really ill after taking the pain-killing drugs which are used today.

The patient suffering from lumbago who is treated Homœopathically is helped considerably during an attack; his pains are eased in the minimum amount of time—and there are no side effects after taking the remedies. As soon as the attack has passed constitutional treatment is given to ensure that no more pains of lumbago can attack the individual—for if his general condition is built up and he is really healthy, then lumbago cannot strike again. Only the weak spots of the body are affected when a patient is subjected to cold, draughts, worries and the hundred and one things that have to be coped with in this difficult world, and if there are no weak spots in the armour—there can be no aches and pains!

Let us consider the actual lumbago attack first. *Antimonium tartaricum* is probably the most commonly used remedy as it corresponds to the patient who has violent pain in the sacro-lumbar region; the slightest effort to move may cause retching and cold, clammy sweat. There is a sensation of a heavy weight at the base of the spine (coccyx) dragging downward all the time.

Guaiacum is another remedy which can palliate in an attack of lumbago—there is an immovable stiffness across the back with a feeling of heat. This is worse motion and cold wet weather.

Rhus tox. will relieve if there is pain and stiffness in the small of the back which is better by movement or lying on something hard. The pains become worse while sitting. Pains are worse cold damp weather and at night.

Phytolacca will help the patient with aching pains in the lumbar region with pains streaking up and down the spine. The back is stiff particularly in the morning on rising and during damp weather.

Aconite will help the patient if the attack of lumbago was brought on by cold winds or from a draught; the pain is very sharp, or the part may feel as though it is sprained; the back is very sensitive and worse from touch.

Bryonia often brings relief when the pains are worse on every movement; the muscles are sensitive to touch and there is a bruised feeling in the back when lying on it; *Bryonia* pains are often worse in dry cold weather.

2 pills of the appropriate remedy in the 6th potency should be taken every three hours until there is relief and then stop. Only repeat if the same pains return.

And now let us consider the constitutional treatment which will build up the patient and make him immune from any future attacks of lumbago. The full case history of the patient must be taken and gone into thoroughly and the appropriate remedy may be chosen from many of the deep acting polychrests.

If the patient is irritable, feels the cold very much and likes a real fag and sits as near to the fire as possible; indulges in plenty of food and drink and is caught up in the rush of busi-

ness life today, smoking innumerable cigarettes and drinking numerous cups of tea and coffee during each day, then *Nuxvomica* must come into the treatment.

If the patient cannot bear constriction particularly round his throat, cannot bear the damp warm weather, and very often gets up with a headache or any other ache or pain (in other words he sleeps into an aggravation) then *Lachesis* must not be overlooked particularly if the aches and pains (of any of his complains) commence on the left side.

Natrum muriaticum must be considered if the patient craves salt, or on the other hand as Dr. Clarke tells us he hates salt, and if he cannot tolerate fats and greasy foods; if he dislikes consolation and fuss and never weeps; and if his eyes water when he laughs at anything really funny (laughs until he cries) or if he walks against a strong wind.

Pulsatilla will be prescribed if the patient cannot tolerate fats, must have lots of fresh air and is better for gentle movement, such as slow walking about. This patient likes affection and a lot of fuss, but is not thirsty.

I could go on giving you the characteristics of the deep acting remedies but space does not permit—remember always, however, that the *patient* must be treated according to his totality of symptoms and then he will be cured—if he is curable.

—*Health & You, May, 1958*