

EPIDEMIC DISEASE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE IN HOMOEOPATHY*

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Last evening a friend stopped me while I was taking a stroll and said, "New Delhi is in the grip of dengue fever in a severe epidemic form." He requested me for a homoeopathic prophylactic medicine, because he is a frequent visitor to New Delhi. The statement did not sound strange because a couple of similar cases were noticed in this author's practice in the twin-city. The Hindu dated 28th Oct. 1982 published that thirty-six people died of dengue fever in Kuala Lumpur where the epidemic was in the most severe form sweeping the country! Frequent air travel helps the spread of the contagious disease.

Homoeopathic therapy is supremely useful for infectious diseases. Several homoeopathic physicians in India found dependable medicaments for the dengue fever epidemics both for prophylaxis and treatment. Very interestingly for homoeopathic prophylaxis for the epidemic disease, one need not hunt for the isolation of the virus or bacteria for the successful vaccination. This is because homoeopathic therapy is essentially symptomatic and not materialistic in approach. Recent studies in the virology revealed startling facts about the futility in preparing vaccines against flu. It is found very difficult to prepare effective vaccine to prevent this disease, because the influenza viruses A, B, and C are frequently changing their genetic pattern each time they appear in the epidemic form in the human! Apart from this in 1976 in the U.S.A., the huge national immunisation programme against swine flu was halted when scientists discovered an apparent excess of cases of a rare paralytic illness called Guillain-Barré syndrome among recently vaccinated people! —The *New York Times* quoted in the *Hindu* dated 31st Oct. 1982.

No less than the founder of Homocopathy, Hahnemann, himself successfully used prophylactic medicines for epidemic diseases. In his time he distributed medicines in a German village for Asiatic cholera when the disease was ravaging in epidemic form in nearby German villages. Surprisingly not even a single case was reported in that village where prophylactic medicine was used. In the many epidemics in India, homoeopathic prophylaxis was very successful. Even in the recent 'brain fever' (encephalitis) epidemic in Andhra Pradesh, homoeopathic prophylaxis and treatment proved very useful and successful.

After an incubation period for 3 to 15 days, dengue fever onset is abrupt with chills or chilly sensations, headache, severe muscular and joint

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pains, slow pulse, low white cell count, conjunctivitis, macular rash, slightly enlarged spleen, lymph nodes in the neck and inguinal region and bleeding in the skin and mucus membranes. Vomiting and diarrhoea are also common symptoms of dengue fever. After high fever for a day or two and again saddle-back type of fever comes for a few days. 'Break bone' or 'dandy' fever are synonyms for dengue fever. It is prevalent in the tropical and sub-tropical countries. Fever, rash, headache and other pains are referred to as the dengue triad. At the onset this fever may be mistaken for flu, malaria or measles.

A few weeks ago a beneficiary of homoeopathic treatment phoned from New Delhi for the treatment of his son who was down with very severe dengue fever. The patient was under this author's treatment for severe chronic allergic obstructive respiratory disorder with good relief. *Eupatorium perfoliatum* in two hundredth potency promptly cured the patient. In the sporadic dengue fever cases observed in the twin-city, the same medicament cured the patients. The science of prescribing for the epidemic disease to a patient is extremely interesting in Homoeopathy. Thorough understanding of the acute miasm and its total symptom manifestation are very useful and it is the correct and applied miasmatic prescription. To prescribe even on one symptom the remedy becomes similimum because the genus epidemicus remedy satisfies the matching of the symptom-totality of the epidemic, both unmanifested and manifested in the patient. That is why the miasmatic prescription although made on single manifested symptom, whether common or uncommon or a concomitant symptom, works well like a *similimum* prescribed on the principle of the totality of symptoms. This scientific approach is within the scientificity of Homoeopathy. To prescribe a miasmatic remedy on totality of symptoms is ideal. Generally an epidemic requires different remedies when raging in different places; at the same time the genus-epidemicus drug can be found out by collecting the whole symptomatology in a few cases of an epidemic in a place and working out the *similimum*. This can act both as the curative remedy in the epidemic as also as prophylaxis. This time the collective and total symptomatology of the few dengue fever cases in Hyderabad, tallied with the *Eupatorium perfoliatum* pathogenesis.

Homoeopathic posology has been the bone of contention right from the time of Hahnemann until today. As a rule no rubber stamp answer is suggested by the experienced physicians. Doctors use a high or a low potency, repeated in single dose or in multiple doses, or different potencies in a day or everyday during the course of treatment; or three graded potencies of a remedy in one day or in three days! So the potency problem has become a mockery in Homoeopathy. But in the epidemic disease a low potency of the epidemic remedy can be suggested as a prophylactic, because even a similar remedy works in patients of unmanifested disease. No less an authority than Kent also emphasized the scientificity of such procedure.

The following two cases explain the art of applied miasmatic prescription. Detailed case-sheets and repertorial analysis are not published, for want of space.

A patient in teens complained of a few paroxysmal fever attacks in two weeks and thereafter protracted hectic fever for two weeks. He was given large doses of anti-malarials and antibiotics with no relief. The tests of blood, urine and stool were normal. The symptoms suggested at different stages of changing patterns of the symptom-complex to Bryonia, Rhus tox and Phosphorus, as seemingly indicated remedies. The administration of these remedies did not help the patient. Nearly forty cases of dengue fever which were treated at that time, by this author appeared sporadically in different places of the twin-city. Thinking that this patient might be having protracted dengue fever, he was given *Eupatorium perfoliatum* in 1M potency one dose and from the very next day the patient had no complaints. The interesting point in this case is that the acute case becomes protracted with the advent of acute miasm in some patients with drug-disease with the use of powerful and large doses in Allopathy. Some of the acute miasms of Hahnemann's time are having chronic course like, herpes, flu and other viral infections.

About the same time a lady patient of twenties complained of lachrymation, cough and coryza, with chills and remittent fever for the past two weeks; she also had headache, severe spells and bouts of diarrhoea and leucorrhoea for three weeks. She was given large doses of quinine preparations and antibiotics with no relief. The blood picture, urine and stool analysis showed nothing significant. The cultures of stool, urine and blood were sterile. There were no vomits, nausea, and body pains except severe headache spells during the time of maximum temperature. She was given one dose of *Eupatorium perfoliatum* 1M. She had gradual decrease of her complaints and became normal in three days.

The concomitant symptom in Homoeopathy is misunderstood by many stalwarts in Homoeopathy. A concomitant symptom need not necessarily be a symptom together with some other related or unrelated symptom in the patient. Syphilitic diathesis even in the grandparents and past generations becomes concomitant to the symptom complex in a patient. That is why a miasmatic prescription based on the symptom from the family history becomes curative to the patient. Acute miasm in the past history of the patient and chronic miasm in the past and family history of the patient gain significance in prescribing. This miasmatic prescription is based on the unmanifested symptoms of that miasm in the patient. This is called the applied pathology in the homoeopathic parlance.

Then the important question arises. Can a chronic disease be prevented in a patient with prophylactics? Young Hahnemannians have suggested even use of *Medorrhinum* and *Syphilinum* as prophylactics to the patients before the indulgence in venery! Such stupid prescribing is unscientific and far from

the truth! This is because the chronic disease and its total symptom manifestations in the people of different countries, are not completely understood. The chronic disease is very slow and insidious in onset unlike epidemic and acute disease. The duration of the prodromal stage of a chronic infection is still debatable. The infection stage of syphilis is disputed by no less a person than Kent. He says that the patient can get syphilis even in a tertiary stage if he or she copulates with a partner at that stage! This is not acceptable to the modern bacteriology and virology! Kent emphasises patient's susceptibility *similimum* as guideline for searching a *similimum* to the patient. The total subjective and objective symptoms of a patient are the patient's susceptibility. The emphasis is on the 'totality of the symptoms' as the patient's disease but not on bacteria or virus. The Kentian theory of infection is true and consistent with Hahnemannian teaching.

The classical therapeutic texts in Homoeopathy suggested Aconite, Rhus tox, Bryonia, Gelsemium and Eupatorium perfoliatum for both prophylaxis and treatment for dengue fever. In this author's past experience, Rhus tox and Bryonia helped in the epidemics of dengue fever both as prophylactic and drugs of choice. On the analogy of the viral aetiology of dengue fever surprisingly Ifco (a nosode prepared with a few strains of influenza viruses by A. Nelson & Co., London) also acted well as a prophylactic drug for dengue fever, in the author's experience in the past. People can use Eupatorium perfoliatum in two hundredth potency one dose for children and three doses for adults in a day for effective prophylaxis for the present dengue fever.

Homoeopathic prophylaxis is inherently endowed with harmlessness and with no side effects and at the same time supremely effective in the prevention. The government should start seriously homoeopathic method of prophylaxis at least in the epidemic diseases where the allopathic system of medicine can offer nothing. This is not to decry other systems of medicines but to bring it to the notice of the public and government to examine seriously homoeopathic prophylaxis in epidemic diseases.