

AN EXPOSITION OF NATRUM MUR

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"It is by using simple remedies that great physicians distinguish themselves from lesser ones".

—Attributed to Hippocrates

INTRODUCTION

We all know that success in Homoeopathy depends to a large extent on our comprehension of the various remedies. The problem of how to study a remedy and how to teach it has baffled many a homoeopath. We have Hering's voluminous *Guiding Symptoms* and that magnum opus Allen's *Encyclopedia*. These works adorn our libraries and are valuable reference books. But if we go into them to study and understand the remedies, we are likely to run away from Homoeopathy for life. *The Materia Medica Pura*, for instance, begins with the symptoms of giddiness and ends with mental symptoms. One famous homoeopath remarked. "Hahnemann's *Materia Medica Pura* begins with vertigo and ends in confusion".¹

In his notes on Natrum mur. my father expresses this rather depressing thought, "I may say that one might never be able to master all the possibilities of a single remedy in one's lifetime".²

We are indeed like the proverbial blindfolded men gauging an elephant. Each of us gets a different picture based on our experience. Natrum mur. has 2900 symptoms. Not many of us use beyond 40 or 50 symptoms. We are living in a palace with a thousand rooms; we occupy only one room and think that the room is the whole palace.

The first step towards the study of a remedy is to connect its numerous seemingly unrelated symptoms. This can be done in more ways than one. The first method is the lavish use of imagination. The second way is to use *our knowledge of physiology and pathology*. And a third way is to find the central strand of the remedy which if you pick up all the symptoms follow like pearls on a string.

The above methods apply more to the physical symptoms. We must now try to understand the mind of the remedy. This would have been a rather difficult job. But thanks to Kent, Tyler, Dunham, Farrington and others, we now have living throbbing images of different remedies. These remedies were fixed in the form of drug pictures so that even now, a century later when we look at these pictures, they move and assume life.

Drugs are like friends. First we have a nodding acquaintance, then closer friendship. As we get to know the friend more and more we recognise him from footsteps or even from the way he rings the door-bell. Similarly when we read more and more about the remedy and meet it in practice, we

get to recognise it when it is partially seen or even disguised. This is often called 'intuition'.

Remember, no remedy stands alone. We must now compare this remedy with its close relatives so that its picture becomes sharper, and we do not mistake it for any other.

All these methods are demonstrated in this study of Natrum mur.

PARENTAGE

Whenever we want to employ a person for job, we first ask him, "Where were you before? And what were you doing there?" Now we want to employ Natrum mur. in our practice. So, let us ask the same questions about it.

Salt, we all know, comes from the sea. A person imbibes certain qualities of the place from which he comes. Salt also has got a few characteristics of the ocean. When we think of the ocean we think of rhythm, the waves move up and down rhythmically. The pains of Natrum mur. are rhythmic; hammering or throbbing. There is rhythmic increase and decrease of symptoms. The tides of the ocean represent a periodic increase and decrease. We find the same periodicity in Natrum mur. It has the aggravation at the same time every day. It has periodic aggravation on alternate day. It has the periodic disease malaria and, finally, it antidotes the drug of marked periodicity, quinine.

The tides of the sea are dependent on the sun and the moon. Similarly Natrum mur. has the aggravation at forenoon and full moon.

In the mental sphere Natrum mur. again shows the alternating high tide and low tide of moods.

The sea is very deep and, for all the activity going on beneath its surface, it is silent, secretive and hides everything in its depths. The Natrum mur. mind is similar to this. It suppresses all the grief and puts forth a calm exterior.

Sometimes Natrum mur. like the sea erupts into sudden violent storms and then subsides to a sudden calm. All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea is not full. Natrum mur. remains depressed even if we pour happiness into it. The rivers pour sweet water into the sea, the sea makes it salty. Natrum mur. looks at the dark side of the best of things.

Coming from the sea Natrum mur. has made friends with other remedies from the sea, viz., Sepia, Spongia, Ambra, Iodine and finally with sea water or Aqua marina² itself.

Now in the ocean, when water evaporates from one area, the salt concentration increases there. This causes a flow of water from other areas of the sea towards the area of higher salt concentration. This is what causes ocean currents. So it is salt (which creates this difference of concentration) that causes movement of water.

Life first originated in the sea. Man and other animals have descended

from sea organisms. If we analyse the concentration of cations in our blood serum, we find that the ratio (Ca:K:Na=5:10:160) is very much similar to their ratio in sea water. In fact our body itself is around 75% water. Muscle is 75% water, liver is 70%, brain is 79% and kidney is 83%. This water is actually a salt solution. Our extra cellular fluid is like an ocean of salt water that surrounds our cells. Our blood and fluids are nothing but a modified form of sea water.⁴

And what does salt do in our body? It does precisely the same things that it does in the sea, it moves the fluids. In the sea when a difference in concentration of salt occurs ocean current results. In the body, a similar process is called osmosis. Leeser remarks that salt is the "impulse factor" for the movement of body fluids.⁵

It is salt that is almost entirely responsible for osmosis. Let us compare the osmotic pressure exerted by different substances:⁶

| | Osmotic pressure in milli osmols | |
|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| K, Mg, Ca | — | 8 |
| Glucose | — | 3 |
| Na | — | 142 |

So we can see that it is the chief mover of water. Like in the sea, salt keeps the fluids in the body in eternal motion. A disturbance in its metabolism stops this movement producing a stagnation. In the physical sphere this is represented by a 'choking, constrictive sensation' throughout. And in the psychical sphere by the stopping of the healthy flow of emotions. The individual becomes stagnant and instead of moving forward reverts to the past.

PHYSIOLOGY

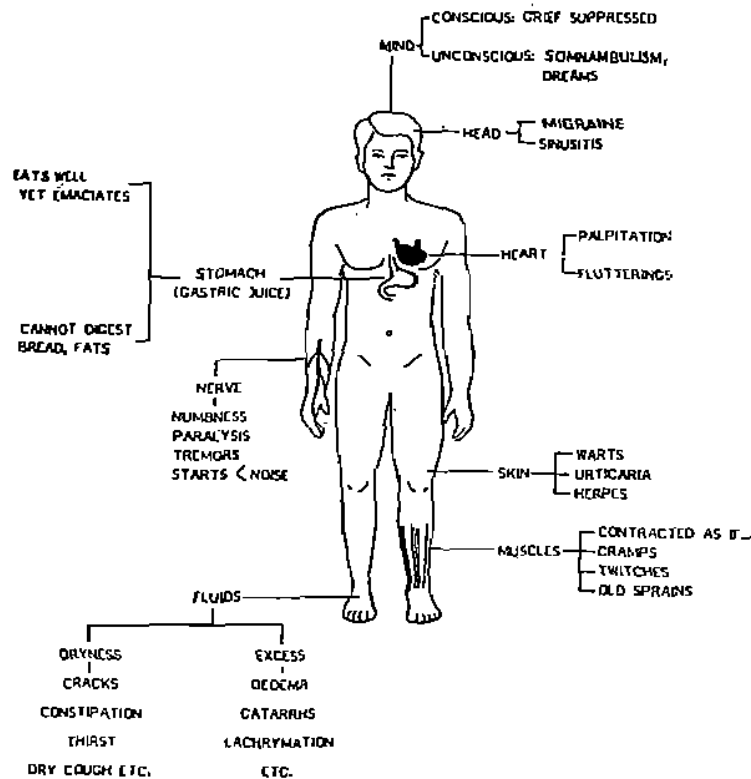
Salt is one of the most essential things for our body. That is why we all need salt. In Mexico, salt was considered so valuable that there was a salt god. The word salary comes from the Greek word for salt. This is because people in ancient Europe were paid for work done in salt.⁷

See what Chatterjee⁸ says about the functions of salt:⁸

- (1) Initiates and maintains contraction of *heart*.
- (2) Essential for contraction of voluntary and involuntary *muscles*.
- (3) Excites *nerves*.
- (4) Maintains *blood reaction*.
- (5) Maintains *osmotic pressure* of body fluids.
- (6) Helps in the formation of *gastric juice*.
- (7) Helps *fat absorption*.
- (8) Maintains *water balance*.

Gutman adds: "The chief protein of the muscle, catomyosin depends on its physiological function on the presence of sodium chloride."⁹

These give us the sphere of action of *Natrum mur.* and the effects therefrom.



NATRUM MURIATICUM
(LOCATIONS AND EFFECTS)

PATHOLOGY

If we study *Natrum mur.* in terms of disturbance in salt metabolism, then *Natrum mur.* has got effects of increased salt concentration (hypernatremia) as well as effects of decreased salt concentration (hyponatremia).

The marked effect of hyponatremia is *weakness*. This is manifested in *Natrum mur.* as apathy, fatigue, weak memory, weak back that needs support. The ligaments are weak causing prolapse. There are involuntary discharges from weakness of the sphincters. Naturally with less salt, the patient has craving for salt.

Hypernatremia manifests as retention of water which leads to oedema and hypertension. This accounts for the predominant relief from perspiration.

We have seen that the metabolism of salt is controlled by the adrenal

cortex. When the gland secretes less (as in hypoadrenalism or Addison's disease), the salt concentration in the body reduces and we find the following effects:

- (1) Salt is lost in the urine and thus salt concentration decreases. This results in great craving for salt.
- (2) Lack of energy.
- (3) Lethargy, *muscular weakness*.
- (4) Anemia.

These are the typical symptoms of Natrum mur. Besides having features of hypoadrenalism, Natrum mur. has also features like thyrotoxicosis:¹⁰

- (a) Emaciation though eating well.
- (b) Palm warm and moist.
- (c) Rapid pulse.
- (d) Palpitations.
- (e) Feeling hot.

The central strand: The function of Natrum mur. consists in properly distributing the water through the organism. A deficiency in this cell-salt causes a disturbance of the water in the human organism. An unequalization of the water in the system will sometimes cause excessive dryness of some mucous membrane, while others may be excreting copiously a water fluid. Natrum mur. is the proper cell-salt to restore the equilibrium (Schuessler).¹¹

Having such an important action on the water metabolism Natrum mur. has the symptoms of *lack of water* as well as excessive water. The lack of water produces dryness, constipation, cracked skin, cracks in the lips, dry cough and the emaciated 'dried up' appearance.

Onkar Singh Khalsa puts it well in the form of a poem:¹²

"Awkward, anaemic, cachectic persons,
Having dirty greasy skin,
Notwithstanding eating well,
Are emaciated and thin."

We have also the other extreme, excess of water and discharges.

Profuse lachrymation (when laughing, coughing). Profuse Catarrhs.

Natrum mur.

| <i>Dryness</i> | <i>Excess of water</i> |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Emaciated, 'dried up' | Catarrh |
| Dry mouth | Lachrymation—when laughing, |
| Thirst | coughing etc. |
| Cracked lips | Dripping from the nose |
| Dry throat (fishbone sensation) | Increased salivation |

| <i>Dryness</i> | <i>Excess of water</i> |
|--|------------------------|
| Blocked nose | Watery diarrhoea |
| Constipation | Greasy sweaty skin |
| Dry stools | Oedema |
| Dry cough | |
| Scanty urine (with red sediment) | |
| Dry vagina (painful coition) | |
| Dryness of the tendons (a contracted feeling) | |

The remedy of contradictions: My first introduction to Natrum mur. came from my revered teacher the late Dr. S. R. Phatak. He opened the Boger's *Synoptic Key*¹³ and read, "*thin, thirsty, hopeless*". Boger has the knack of coining a general from numerous particular symptoms. Now in Natrum mur. he says "hopeless". This is a physical general symptom. By this it means not only that the patient is mentally hopeless but also that the case is hopeless. That indicates in Natrum mur. we are presented with a set of contradictory symptoms.

Leeser explains that Natrum mur. has two aggressive elements bound together—one which turns water into a strong alkali (sodium), and chlorine which turns water into a strong acid.¹⁴

Gibson says, "The explanation for this paradoxical duality of effects lies in the fact that the remedy is of course two agents in one. The bipolar nature of the symptoms in different individuals or in the same individual at different times will result from the preponderance of effect of either the sodium or the chlorine element."¹⁵

Wherever you go, Natrum mur. has this duality of effects.

Let us take for instance its desires and aversions. We all know of its

* There is in some quarters the impression that any salt has in its effects the combination of effects of the acid radical and the base radical. For instance Argentum nitricum is formed by the action of nitric acid on silver oxide. Hence it should have symptoms of both. Stonham shows that this is true. Some of the symptoms of Argentum nitricum are common to Nitric acid and some to Argentum metallicum. But the really characteristic and leading symptoms are not found in either but are unique to Argentum nitricum itself.

If in this way we analyse Natrum mur. we find that the chlorinic factor of salt can account for the following symptoms:

Headache and heaviness in the occiput; headache worse in the forenoon; soreness in the sinuiput. Perpendicular half sight, epistaxis; fluent nasal discharge. Weak feeling in the stomach, sexual weakness. Attacks occurring principally in the morning. (The Natrum influence seems to be all powerful, the chlorine weak). Stonham concludes: "*The salt is more than the sum of the qualities of the elements that compose it.*"¹⁶

desire for salt and aversion to bread.¹⁶ But surprisingly, it has also got aversion to salt and desire for bread to almost the same extent. In fact most of its aversions are also included in desires in the repertory. The exception is the aversion to fat. However, Margaret Tyler in her article 'Repertorising'¹⁷ gives a case of Natrum mur. which has desire for fat.

Thus, Natrum mur. has:

| <i>Aversion</i> | <i>Desire</i> |
|-----------------|--|
| Bread | Bread |
| Coffee | Coffee |
| Fats | — |
| Meat | Meat |
| Salt | Salt |
| Tobacco | — |
| Water | Great thirst |
| Wine | Wine |
| Food | Ravenous appetite |
| — | Lime, slate, pencils, chalk, clay, earth etc. |

Let us compare some other symptoms:

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------|
| Hair dry | Hair greasy |
| Hair grows | Hair falling |
| Eyes dry | Profuse lachrymation |
| Eyes sunken | Eyes hulging |
| Face ruddy | Face pallor |
| Features hollow | Features puffy |

Now let us study some of its modalities.

The first is the thermal modality. Is Natrum mur. hot or chilly? Here again it shows its contradictory nature. Lippe says Natrum mur. has, "great chilliness with disposition to put on more clothing".¹⁸ Biochemic practitioners also consider it to be chilly. But we know its aggravation from the heat of sun. Cleveland points out that natrum mur. patient is ameliorated by open air.²⁰ In fact *Natrum mur. cannot tolerate the extremes of heat or cold. The characteristic is however coldness of parts and chilliness relieved by cold.*

The second modality we shall consider is the effect of seashore. Salt comes from the sea and is bound to be affected by it. But again it shows both effects. It has aggravation at seashore in some cases and amelioration at seashore in others.** Burnett reports a case of obstinate neuralgia on which he exhausted all neuralgic drugs and not knowing what to do, he

** This is like Carcinosis which has both aggravation and amelioration at seashore.²¹

sent her to the seaside and when she came back, she was worse. Taking aggravation at seashore, he gave Natrum mur. which cured.²³ Puddephatt reports a case of dysmenorrhoea and the patient was ameliorated at seaside.²³ Hughes records a case of a girl whose constipation was ameliorated at seashore.²⁴ Considering the aggravation from seashore, we must find Natrum mur. a very important remedy in Bombay. Especially because most patients definitely notice an amelioration by going out of Bombay. This is more seen in chronic colds and asthma.

Some Contradictory Modalities

| <i>Aggravation</i> | <i>Amelioration</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Heat & cold | |
| Seashore | Seashore |
| Eating | Breakfast |
| Coition (sadness after) | Coition (cheerful after) |
| Pressure | Tight clothing |

When we come across masters in Homoeopathy and see the different ways in which they manipulate materia medica, we are awestruck. Dr. S. R. Phatak once told us of a case of chronic non-malignant ulcer of the tongue. When he went to palpate the ulcer, the patient said "Do not touch it, touching causes too much pain." A lesser person would have taken it as aggravation from touch. Dr. Phatak immediately asked, "How do you eat?" To which surprisingly, the patient replied, "I do not get any pain while eating." Taking this as a contradictory modality and taking ulcer, tongue, Dr. Phatak gave Natrum mur. which cured in no time.

We have seen that most marked effect of lack of salt is *weakness*. This weakness accounts for the great aggravation from the slightest exertion. Aggravation from exertion of eyes, from slight mental exertion (school girls' headache), talking, reading, writing, eating etc. and the relief from rest, lying down, fasting etc.

Another leading modality is the time modality. Natrum mur. is characteristically worse at 10 to 11 a.m. Many explanations have been advanced to account for this specific time modality. Gutman suggests that the aggravation at forenoon is due to increased adrenaline production.²⁵ The osmotic pressure also reaches its peak at forenoon. The chlorine excretion reaches its peak at 11 a.m.

However, it has also the modality of increasing and decreasing with the sun. A lesser known time modality is aggravation morning on waking.

Natrum mur. covers the ailments resulting from using excess of salt.²⁶ Subash Shah records a case of a gentleman who fell down on the footpath and

was brought to his clinic. His B. P. was 190/110. He disliked salt. He asked him if any time he had done the nature cure exercise of *neti* and *dhauti*. (This involved drinking salt water and then bringing it out through the nose). The patient admitted having done these 3 years back for 3/4 months. On this he gave him Natrum mur. and brought down the B.P. the next day²⁷.

But the most important causative modality of Natrum mur. lies in its emotions.

Sarla Sonawala puts these generalities beautifully in *Haiku*.^{**}

"Nay, Nope,
Sun, Salt, Sentiment,
Natrum Eh?"

Natrum mur. generalities:

- (1) Features like the ocean.
- (2) Features of hyponatremia and hypernatremia.
- (3) Features of Addison's disease and features of thyrotoxicosis.
- (4) Features of disturbed water metabolism.
- (5) Contradictory modalities and symptoms.

Some important modalities of sodium chloride:

| <i>Aggravation</i> | — | <i>Explanation</i> |
|--------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| Sun | — | Heat, with sun; forenoon. |
| Ocean | — | Seashore, salty air, salt. |
| Depression | — | Grief; disappointment in love. |
| Irritation | — | Touch, noise, music etc. |
| Union | — | Coition. |
| Menstruation | — | Before and after menses. |
| Consolation | — | Sympathy, company, etc. |
| Head injury | — | — — |
| Lunar | — | Full moon, first quarter. |
| Old sprains | — | — — |
| Reading | — | Studying, school girl's headache etc. |
| Intermittent | — | Periodically malaria; quinine. |
| Day Alternate | — | — — |
| Exertion | — | Slight; talking, mental, of eyes etc. |

PSYCHOLOGY

The natrum mur. mind is very interesting to study. It is also a difficult patient to study. This is like Kali carb. Under Kali carb. Kent mentions, "It is a very difficult patient to study."²⁹ We wondered why Kent made this

* *Haiku* is a Japanese style poetry of seven words.

statement. Once when reading Phatak's *Materia Medica*,²⁰ we were struck by this sentence in Kali carb.: "At a loss to know how to say what she wishes." Naturally the patient is a difficult one to study, he is vague about his symptoms. But Natrum mur. is different. Here the patient hides his symptoms, hides his grief. And whatever little he tells, it is all contradictory.

The mind of natrum mur. is predominated by grief. It is the most valuable remedy for chronic effects of grief. Here the patient keeps brooding about what unpleasantness happened in the past. He seems to recall these things just for the sake of brooding about them. He seems to enjoy brooding. *He rubs salt in his own wounds.*

For chronic effects of grief we must compare other remedies. My father tabulated them thus:²¹

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| Sadness + depression | = Aur. met. |
| Sadness + apathy | = Phos. acid |
| Sadness + brooding | = Natrum mur. |
| Sadness + disgust | = Sepia |
| Sadness + tearfulness | = Pulsatilla |
| Sadness + quarrelsome | = Staph. |
| Sadness + hysterical | = Cimicifuga |

Hering presents a good picture:²² "Tries to recollect past disagreeable events for the purpose of thinking of them and indulging the grief which it causes." "Sadness Causeless." From this we gather that when sadness is out of proportion to the cause or where the incident is invoked repeatedly even after years, Natrum mur. is one of the chief remedies to be considered. *He wastes fresh tears over old griefs.*

"Weeps when alone", "sadness before menses", "sadness aggravated by consolation". Natrum mur. must prove useful in what is called pre-menstrual tension. So much does he want to grieve that if there is no cause in the past, he will grieve about the future (Kent's *Repertory* p. 51). Sadness during pregnancy. Think of this remedy in what is called pregnancy-blues.

Another feature of Natrum mur. is "silent grief". Sad, yet unable to weep. *Grief suppressed, cannot cry. This is given in Kent's Repertory in the following places:*

1. Grief, silent (p. 51); 2. Grief, cannot cry (p. 54); 3. Weep, cannot, though sad (p. 94); 4. Anger, ailments after, silent grief (p. 2); 5. Sadness, weep cannot (p. 78).

All this suppression must find expression somewhere. The conscious mind of Natrum mur. does not permit such expression. So in sleep when the conscious mind is relaxed Natrum mur. gets the freedom to vent its feelings. Thus we have the symptoms, talking in sleep, somnambulism, weeping in sleep and making verses after falling asleep.

The picture of grief presented by Natrum mur. comes very close to the picture of depression given by psychiatry. Let us compare the picture of

depression as given in Linford Lees' *A Short Textbook of Psychiatry*³³ and the pictures of Natrum mur. given in Hahnemann's *Chronic Diseases*³⁴ and Kent's *Reperatory*.³⁵

| <i>Depression</i> | <i>Natrum mur.</i> |
|--|--|
| (a) Sadness. | Joyless, sad and dejected. |
| (b) Inability to concentrate; slowness of thought; difficulty in grasping and answering a question. | "Difficulty in thinking; she had to think a while, before she could hit on the right thing." |
| (c) Thoughts about his difficulties and liabilities. | She takes everything in bad light, weeps and cries. |
| (d) Magnifies minor misdemeanours of the past and regards them as unforgivable sins. | "Anxiety of conscience as if guilty of a crime"—Kent. |
| (e) Ruminates (broods) over his past. | Dwells on past disagreeable events. |
| (f) Anxiety, restlessness. | Anxiety and restlessness. |
| (g) Loss of interest and enjoyment in his usual work, family, hobbies. | "In the midst of his work he suddenly loses all pleasure in it"; "indifferent and sad". |
| (h) Hypochondriasis; fear of diseases like cancer, sexually transmitted diseases etc. | Anxiety, hypochondriacal. |
| (i) Sleepless — waking in early morning. | Sleepless from grief—Kent. Sleepless after 2 a.m.—Kent. |
| (j) Moods worse in the morning. | 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. aggravation. |
| (k) Loss of libido. | Quiescent, very dormant state of the sexual instinct. |
| (l) Physical symptoms: Headache, blurred vision, giddiness, constipation, dry mouth, palpitation. Loss of appetite. Amenorrhoea. | All these are found predominantly in Natrum mur. |

With so much similarity between the symptoms of Natrum mur. and depression, it hardly comes as a surprise when Bodman reports that "A disturbance of sodium metabolism is reported in recent researches on the biochemistry of depressives."³⁶

He further draws attention to the fact that "Psychiatrists have pointed out

* Does the disturbed sodium metabolism causes depression or does depression causes a disturbed sodium metabolism?

that while weeping is common to reactive depression, the severely endogenous depressive is unable to cry". He records a case of menopausal depression where the patient after death of her husband was unable to cry.

Depression is also common in old age. It may be produced from (a) recent loss of spouse, (b) departure of children to marry and live in a different part of the country and (c) to be the only surviving person among all brothers and sisters.

Dr. Campbell found *Natrum mur.* useful in people who have nursed aged parents for a long number of years and then developed asthma/arthritis some months after the death of the old parent, as a result of a kind of chronic shock.²⁷

Brain and Walton point out that depression may result after head injury.²⁸ *Natrum mur.* covers this causation also.

Sandra Chase writes: "the woman who needs *Natrum mur.* is depressed and has been so for a long time. Characteristically, she has attempted to suppress this depression, as she has attempted so to do with all of her emotions. She may feel guilty about her depression. But she tends to be a private person who internalises her emotions. She will say that she is well when she is not. Sometimes she will say that there is nothing wrong with her".²⁹

Let us analyse one case of depression.

Case: Mrs. G. S. aged 34 years came with hoarseness of voice worse from cold drinks. Painless. Agg. talking. Dull pain in ear. Pains in the left arm. Pain back after parturition.

Craves sweet, salt, bitter. Sweat with salty sediment. Bleeding gums. Depressed. Sadness more before menses. Wants to cry, but cannot, tears simply do not come. Pessimistic, hypochondriacal. Fears darkness, sudden noise.

There is marital disharmony. Her husband expects too much of her— expects her to be the traditional housewife who regards the husband at par with god. She, on the other hand, comes from a convent school and expects a give and take relationship with the husband.

We can see her symptoms corresponding clearly to *Natrum mur.* This was given in the 1M potency and it cured her.

Let us discuss this case. We know *Natrum mur.* has got effects of unexpressed grief. Now in which life situation does grief remain silent? If we analyse this we have the following situations:

(1) Between an irate boss and his employees. But here the emotion is one of suppressed anger, not so much grief.

(2) A disappointed lover; here is a situation where one does not express. So *Natrum mur.* is one of the chief remedies for those disappointed in love. Indeed *Natrum mur.* has got tendency to fall in love with the most unsuitable person and if this love is not reciprocated, there is sadness, weeping, and a host of contradictory symptoms.

(3) The third situation we should analyse is marital disharmony. The partner (husband or wife) starts off with love for the spouse. But in the initial stage of marriage one sees in the partner an ideal person, full of virtues. One loves not the real person, but the image that has been built in one's mind. Slowly one starts realising that there are certain qualities in the partner that one does not like. The disappointment sets in. If there is a maturity in thought, one accepts facts. But if such maturity is lacking, the disappointment intensifies and grief and brooding set in. This is more than disappointment in love. In disappointment of love the incident is forgotten in course of time. But in marital discord the grief is alive and working, cannot be told, chronic and long continued. This is the ideal situation for Natrum mur.

I suggest that in a marital discord we should look into the case and see whether there are features of Natrum mur. Of course, slowly the patient may become indifferent and apathetic in which case Natrum mur. will be followed by Sepia which is its complementary (see the rubric Aversion to husband, page 9).

Along with giving the remedy in such cases, counselling helps a great deal. When the husband of the patient, referred to above, came to me for his own treatment, I found that he too was disappointed. I spent time to advise; and this he says has greatly benefited both of them (vide my article 'The Mind'—*Indian Journal of Homoeopathy*, July 1982).

Next to grief or allied to it, the Natrum mur. mind is dominated by resentment. The guiding-symptoms give us this golden feature: "Hates persons because they offended him". Aur., Mang., Nit. acid, Sulph.). The patient recalls the people who have offended him and broods about this for days on end.

Chase writes, "In my practice, I find that these women frequently have an associated underlying anger, often described by the patient as *resentment*. I find that these women have a long-standing suppressed anger, a resentment long held in, frequently arising from an early deprivation, or perceived deprivation, often involving a significant adult figure in their childhood, usually a parent. Her lack of weeping may be part and parcel of her chronic resentment in which she long ago decided not to give the offender the satisfaction of seeing her cry. Too, its lack is a part of the Natrum mur. characteristic of suppressing her emotions. Her suppressed anger becomes resentment which prompts her depression. But she is not open in her discussion of these feelings. In the case-taking process, she may be a tough nut to crack for this reason. While weeping on telling her symptoms prompts me to think of Sepia and Pulsatilla, detection of some subliminal hostility prompts me to consider Natrum mur. in that patient. This may be the first sign of her hidden resentment. Although these women are very private people, they will manifest some transference during the doctor-patient interview. They may begin to perceive the interviewer as their resented past significant figure which perception will be expressed in this masked hostility."⁴⁰

Margery Grace Blackie, that great exponent of Homoeopathy, writes: "Now another thing about Natrum mur. is that they do remember any slight or any bad treatment, or anything that they thought was unfair from the time it happened for the rest of their life. They are very inclined to brood over anything that they think has been wrong or been unfair to them and they do not get away from it."⁴¹

Permit me to quote a case of Paschero which illustrates this aspect of Natrum mur.⁴²

A girl aged 17 came with persistent fever of six months' duration. One day as she came back from school, she vomited and complained of fatigue and abdominal colic without stool; that night her temperature rose to 104° F. A doctor diagnosed appendicitis and after preliminary antibiotics she was operated on next day. Fever continued, ranging from 102.2° to 103.1° F. She underwent complete radiological and laboratory investigations and the cholecystogram revealed many little stones in the gallbladder. As it was not possible to make a precise diagnosis, cholecystectomy was performed. There was no change.

The story Paschero got was that on 13th November 1982 the girl had history exam. The need to pass was imperative. She went up in a state of anxiety and had to wait 50 minutes while one of her classmates, a relation of their teacher, was being examined. When her turn came she was questioned scarcely five minutes. She was asked two questions and failed to answer one, so that she did not pass. She ran home in a state of indignation with stomach spasms and vomiting. Some hours later the fever started and the doctor, who initiated the appendicectomy, was called.

Formerly a kind, good-humoured girl, she had become irritable, sad and harsh, insulting friends and relations whom she rejected indignantly at the least consolation, and wishing to be alone. She had profound drowsiness before every meal.

For repertorisation he associated two definite symptoms: ailments after anger, vexation, etc. (p. 2), with consolation aggravation (p. 16).

The outstanding concomitants were, sleepiness before eating (p. 1250) and constriction convulsive in stomach (p. 383). With these four determinant symptoms Natrum mur. emerged alone.

(To be continued)

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AN EXPOSITION OF NATRUM MUR

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(Continued from page 50)

A single dose of Natrum mur. 1M caused in this patient an intense headache which however she tolerated; it was followed by an astonishing amelioration with elimination of fever and quick recovery.

Let us compare few important remedies for ailments from mortification:

| <i>Remedy</i> | <i>Effect</i> |
|---------------|-------------------------|
| Chamomilla | Violent anger |
| Colocynth | Colic |
| Ignatia | Paradoxical, hysterical |
| Lycopodium | Hurt pride |
| Natrum mur. | Brooding |
| Phos. acid | Taciturn |
| Staphisagria | Insult |

Reaction to consolation: It is generally accepted that Natrum mur. is averse to consolation and is aggravated by it. As Patersimilias rhymes.⁴³

"Though he wasn't quite as well as he seemed to be
He concealed it as he didn't like sympathy."

Regarding the reaction to sympathy I have found that though aggravation from consolation is an important feature of this remedy, amelioration from consolation should not rule it out. Considering its contradictory modalities, it is no surprise that some natrum mur. patients are relieved by consolation.

It would be useful to stress here that the absence of a symptom never contra-indicates an otherwise well-indicated remedy. In Natrum mur. craving for salt or aggravation in the sun are not mandatory. The remedy has been given successfully even when these symptoms were absent. Natrum mur. has 2900 symptoms. One cannot expect all the symptoms of a patient to be covered by the remedy that has the range and depth of the patient's illness. Balfour reports: "Some of the accepted hallmarks of Nat. mur. usually regarded as indispensable, were seldom stamped on my patients."⁴⁴

Let us go back to Natrum mur.'s reaction to consolation. Different authors have different viewpoints on this.

Hui Bon Hoa says, "The natrum mur. patient will often tell you that he likes consolation. Even so, we prescribe Natrum mur. when the patient tells us that he is improved by consolation (or when he seems to be improved by consolation)."⁴⁵

Hubbard writes that Natrum mur. is a "closed book; taciturn, secret, sad, yet craving love and saved by it."⁴⁴

Hamish Boyd opines, "They dislike sympathy but at the same time crave attention which they consider due to them."⁴⁷

Pulford says that the natrum mur. patient "bids for sympathy yet (has) anger when consoled."⁴⁸

Whitmont analyses, "Natrum mur. feels isolated and lonely, the patient longs for love and sympathy, but an inner command, as it were, forbids their acceptance. An inaudible voice of his ego urges him to find the source of strength within himself."⁴⁹

Margery Blackie adds, "The natrum mur. likes attention. They pretend they do not like it, that they do not want attention and they do not want consolation and all these."⁵⁰

Twentyman reasons: "Under the stronger emotional challenges they become irritable even impossible and I think, this accounts for the often repeated phrase that they object to sympathy. It is not sympathy discreetly, tactfully, offered that they object to, but they fear being involved, overwhelmed in an emotional situation beyond their control. They excel in a gentle sympathy which keeps uninvolved and people hence may go to them in their troubles."⁵¹

After such discussion we can only emphasise again that *amelioration from consolation does not rule out Natrum mur.* We believe that the core personality of Natrum mur. needs consolation and craves attention, but often something, may be the past experience and disappointments, make the patient chary when offered sympathy.

Let us shift to another aspect of Natrum mur. We have seen the contradictory, changeable nature of its symptoms in general. The same effect is manifested in the mind.

Blackie comments, "Natrum mur. has an unstable mentality, there is no doubt about that. That is one of its characteristics. They can be absolutely up at the top and laughing, or down in the depths in two minutes and too gloomy for words. They are really a mass of contradictions. They are difficult to get on with. They are difficult to live with. As Dr. Borland always said: "They are very nice to know but not so nice to live with."⁵²

It is this sudden change from one mood to another that brings Natrum mur. close to manic-depressive psychosis:—

| | |
|--------------|-------------------|
| <i>Manic</i> | <i>Depressive</i> |
| Cheerful | Depressed |
| Merry | Crossed |
| Laughing | Sad |

In this Natrum mur. comes close to the hysterical personality of Ignatia. We have observed that some natrum mur. patients laugh when asked a question especially about their mind. They force themselves to laugh. If you ask

them, "Do you have any disappointment, grief etc.", they laugh. They laugh immoderately. They laugh at serious matters. We were at loss for the reason of this laughter, when we knew that there was so much tension within. But we get the answer to this contradiction from Leeser who explains "Occasionally the internal tension is revealed in forced laughter."⁵²

With all this internal agitation, grief and tension, and with a changing mind, Natrum mur. can be classified in modern psychology as an unstable introvert.

The introverted nature is mentioned by Hahnemann, Maville and Harling confirm: "Natrum mur. is for introverts (like Sulphur is for extroverts)."⁵⁴

Another predominant emotion in Natrum mur. is anxiety and fear. It has fear of crowd, robbers etc. It is one of the leading remedies for ailments from fright. Let us compare it with the others.

Ailments from fright

| | | |
|-------------|---|----------------------------|
| Aconite | — | Restless. |
| Ignatia | — | Hysterical, insane. |
| Natrum mur. | — | Dwelling on the event. |
| Opium | — | Confused, numb. |
| Phos. acid | — | Apathetic. |
| Phosphorus | — | Must have company. |
| Pulsatilla | — | Weeping. |
| Silicea | — | Anxious, timid. |
| Stramonium | — | Delirious, screaming, etc. |

It also has very prominently starting from noise, trifles and fright.

But we must mention that often the natrum mur. patient is not eager to express his fears. Like he suppresses his grief he suppresses his fears, and puts on a bold front. He may be meek and insecure from within, but appears strong and dominating externally. He may crave consolation, but appears not to need it. So rightly has it been said that "He is a man of straw appearing as a man of steel."⁵⁵

Tyler lays down that "The Lycopodium mentality gives way on the intellectual side, that of Natrum mur. on the emotional and sentimental side."⁵⁶

Natrum mur. has also the great weakness of the intellect. The memory is very poor, especially for recent events. But we know that its memory for past events is very active. Recent memory can be disturbed by electric convulsive therapy showing that it is stored as electrical charges. Past memory is not disturbed by this procedure showing probably that it has become consolidated in the brain as structural changes.

Allied to the weakness of memory, we have confusion especially when talking, reading, and calculating leading to mistakes in speaking. Another sign of impairment of the intellectual ability is the school girl's headache on studying.

Sometimes the natrum mur. can present as a Pulsatilla or Phosphorus. He can be mild, yielding, weeping easily. He can also be affectionate and sympathetic.

It is mysterious why only a few symptoms of a remedy are repeatedly stressed, ignoring the numerous others. For instance, "Crack in the middle of the lower lip" says Boericke in Natrum mur.⁵⁷ But if we go to the *Encyclopedia*⁵⁸ we see that equally prominent is the symptom: "crack in the middle of the upper lip." One wonders why no one stressed this.

Similarly curiously, only a few remedies have been stressed for a particular symptom. The numerous other drugs that have the symptom seem to have been overlooked. For instance, we all have heard repeatedly the symptoms of "Dreams of robbers, must get up and search the house before he sleeps". Now this symptom is not mentioned in Allen's *Encyclopedia*.⁵⁹ He has mentioned only "Dreams of robbers". So the rest of the symptom seems to be from clinical sources. Also, we find that so many remedies have the dream of robbers. If we read Natrum carb. we find that it has these dreams even more prominently than Natrum mur. Yet one recalls only Natrum mur. when faced with this symptom. This exercise also shows the usefulness of the repertory. If we look into the repertory we find so many drugs listed under "Dreams of robbers". Indeed the repertory broadens our vision.

So let us now summarise the natrum mur. mind with the study of the repertory.

Natrum muriaticum: A study of its Mind from the Repertory.

Here are all the rubrics from Kent's *Repertory* (Mind) which contain Natrum mur. as the only remedy (marked with an asterisk), or one out of the few first grade remedies in the rubric. So in essence, if we find any of these symptoms in a patient, we must strongly consider Natrum mur.

| | |
|--|--|
| Abrupt | Confusion, talking while (Staph., Thuj.) |
| Affectionate | |
| Anger, consoled when (ars., cham.) | Conversation agg. (Ign.) |
| Anxiety on waking from frightful dreams (Ars.) | Delirium during chill |
| Anxiety hypochondriacal | Delusions: thieves, voices, distant voices |
| Anxiety, menses before | *Discontented with everything |
| Anxiety, menses during | Dwells on past disagreeable events |
| *Cheerful, coition after | |
| Concentration difficult, talking when (Merc.) | Fear crowd |
| Confusion, calculating when (Nux. v.) | Fear, menses during |
| Confusion, reading while | Fear robbers |
| | Fear storm |
| | *Fear walking |

Fear falling, when walking
 Fright, ailments from
 Frightened at night

Grief, ailments from
 Grief, cannot cry
 Grief, future for
 Grief, silent

Hatred, persons who offend
 (Aur.)
 Hysteria
 Hysteria, fainting

Inconsolable
 Indifferent to pleasure
 *Indignation, pregnant while
 Indiscretion
 Indolence
 Irresolution in ideas
 Irritability
 Irritability during chill, heat,
 sweat
 Irritability, consolation agg. (Ign.,
 Sep., Sil.)
 Irritability, questioned when
 Irritability, takes everything in
 bad part

Laughing, immoderately
 Laughing at serious matters
 Lachrymation when laughing
 Loathing life
 Loathing work
 Love, ailments from disappointed
 Love, silent grief
 Ludicrous, things seem

Mania-a-potu
 Memory weak, happened for what
 has just
 Memory weak from mental labour
 Memory weak from mental
 fatigue

Memory weak, occurrences of the
 day

Memory weak, read for what has
 just

Memory weak, thought for what
 has just

Memory weak, write for what he
 is just

Men, dread of

Mildness

Mistakes in speaking

*Mistakes, speaking what he does
 not intend

Mortification

Reproaches, himself

Reproaches, others

Sadness, coition after

Sadness during chill, heat, sweat

Sadness, weep cannot

*Shameless in bed

Somnambulism (Acon., Op.,
 Phos.)

Startled easily

Starting, shocks electric during
 sleep (Arg. n., Ars., Nux. m.)

Starting, fright from

Starting, noise from

Starting, trifles at

Sympathetic

Talk, slow learning to

Talking, pleasure in his own
 (Par., Stram.)

Talking, sleep in

Thoughts, disease

Thoughts, persistent evening

Thoughts, tormenting

Thoughts, unpleasant subject

Torpor (Nux. m., Op.)

Unconscious during chill

Unconscious during fever

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| *Verses makes, after falling asleep | Weeping, when looked at |
| Violent, at trifles | *Weeping, pitied if he believes he is |
| †Weeping, alone when (Con.) | Weeping, sleep during |
| Weeping, causeless | Work, aversion to, complaints from |
| Weeping, involuntary | Women, aversion to |
| *Weeping, past events | |

† Tears contain salt.

The following rubrics are conspicuously missing:

- (1) Brooding, (2) Fear, alone of being, (3) Sadness, causeless, (4) Contradiction intolerant of, (5) Irritability children in.

PRACTICALITY

Case No. 1. Vocal nodules: Master S. A., aged 10 years came with hoarseness of voice on speaking. The parents attributed to much shouting which the boy indulged in. Agg. in the evening and agg. after speaking. They consulted a famous E.N.T. surgeon who saw three vocal nodules and advised surgery. The boy was then brought to see if Homoeopathy had anything to offer.

The boy had very little symptoms besides. He was thin, emaciated and inquiry revealed that his appetite was above average. On examining his past history we found that other milestones being normal, the talking began late—at 2½ years. The boy was intelligent and active. Taking the following symptoms:

- (1) Appetite increased, ravenous, emaciation with (p. 479), (2) Talk, late learning to (p. 86), we came to Natrum mur.

We gave the patient Natrum mur. 30, 200 and later 1M in repeated doses. The hoarseness entirely subsided within 3 months. The parents inquired as to what must have happened to the vocal nodules. They were advised to contact the same E.N.T. surgeon again. The surgeon examined the boy and reported that two of the nodules had disappeared and the third had much reduced in size.

We continued the treatment. After around 3 months the boy developed boils all over the body. We felt that this must be a recurrence of old symptoms. But the parents insisted that the boy had no skin troubles at all in the past. So we were a trifle puzzled. But luckily we found the solution. The mother of the boy started taking our treatment. When we asked her the past history, she said that during pregnancy she had developed boils on her body and also was found to be having diabetes. The eruptions came out in the boy with a cure of the nodules demonstrating a peculiar application of the Hering's law.

Let us gather a few features of Natrum mur. from this case.

(1) It is the most prominent remedy in late learning to talk. It is absent in late teething. Thus the remedy seems to have a late intellectual development, rather than a combined mental and physical retardation of the baryta or calcarea types.

(2) Natrum mur. is so penetrating that it could remove an apparently surgical condition.

(3) It has got effects of suppressed eruptions, though this is not mentioned in repertory.

(4) Of course this case demonstrates the value of constitutional treatment: Treat not the illness, but the patient with the illness.

Case No. 2. Warts: Miss D.F. came on 20th March 1982 with warts on the left thumb and palm for the past two years. Besides this, she had falling and greying hair, dandruff, acne, and irregular periods.

Amongst her important symptoms were:—

- (1) Perspiration palms, soles and upper lip.
- (2) Pain in the back on the first day of menses.
- (3) Yellowish leucorrhoea.
- (4) Craves sweets.
- (5) Irritable.
- (6) Food tastes saltish.

It must be confessed that initially Thuja was given, which was continued for two months with no relief in any of her troubles.

Then on 5.6.1982 we gave her Natrum mur. 200. The acne showed immediate improvement. We continued with Natrum mur. 1M, 10M and 50M and she was relieved of dandruff and falling hair. Finally on 4th September we gave her Natrum mur. CM and the warts became slightly reduced in size. She was okay in all other respects. She asked whether she could get the warts removed. It was reasoned that now since only the end product was left (and the illness was cured), there would be no harm if it was removed. We did not see her till 20th November 1982 when she came without the wart. She said joyfully "it fell out on its own, doctor".

Let us draw certain reasonable inferences from this case:

(1) Kent observes that Natrum mur. is very slow in its action. Indeed I salute this genius and verify the correctness of his statement. It took from March till November for the wart to go.

(2) What are we to do in this period. Are we to give one dose of Natrum mur. 200 and because the improvement has begun, wait indefinitely and keep the fingers crossed? Or are we to repeat and go to the higher potencies? At least in this case repetition has helped and the CM potency has done only good.

Case No. 3. Chronic allergic rhinitis: This case of Mr. R.G. aged 18 presents some interesting features. He came on 26th September 1981 for constant colds. For the past two years sneezing daily in the morning. Nose obstructed. His important symptoms were:

Headache agg. in sun. Craves eggs, milk, averse to fish. Lies on abdomen during sleep. Sweat has sour odour. Tremors in the presence of strangers. Anxiety felt in the stomach. Nausea and headache from hunger. Timid, likes company. Greasy face. Teething 6 months, walking at 11 months, talking at 2 years age. Ringworm on thighs. Falling and graying of hair. Perspiration on the nose.

Now we gave him a questionnaire form and called him again the next week. In the answers he had written many things, but what attracted attention was: "I find it difficult to pass urine when there is a crowd". One wonders how one can elicit golden symptoms like these without careful detailed questioning or a questionnaire form.

A study of the other symptoms convinced us that the case was indeed *Natrum mur.*

For the repertory-minded, here are the rubrics:

- (1) Head pain, sun agg. (p. 149).
- (2) Desires Milk (p. 485).
- (3) Averse to fish (p. 480).
- (4) Timidity (p. 89).
- (5) Face greasy (p. 375).
- (6) Talk, late learning to (p. 86).
- (7) Urination, retarded, alone, can only pass urine when (p. 660).

We gave him *Natrum mur.* 30, 200, 1M and 10M each for 2 weeks one after the other and there was no change at all. But, firmly convinced that *Natrum mur.* was his remedy we continued and after 3 months the patient noticed the first signs of improvement. Thereafter, the improvement was steady and with weekly doses of *Natrum mur.* 10M the patient became totally well by 31st March 1982.

This case confirms the slow rate of action of *Natrum mur.* We should not be in a hurry to change the prescription. We can only do this if we have confidence in our prescription. For this we must base it on solid facts. And to get facts, a detailed and careful case-taking is essential. This case demonstrates the value of detailed case-taking.

Natrum mur. has been much valued as a remedy for colds, both acute and recurrent. Boericke says that it is infallible for stopping a cold commencing with sneezing. Clarke takes credit for bringing *Natrum mur.* forward as a remedy for colds.⁶⁰ He says, "It is one of the most valuable remedies for colds we possess. With this I have frequently removed the susceptibility to cold".

*Natrum mur. in fevers**: For a long time we regarded *Natrum mur.* as a chronic remedy slow in action and as having little place in the treatment of acute conditions. In fact we were advised to give *Bryonia* when we found *Natrum mur.* indicated in acute conditions. We were warned that it might be

*Concentrated salt solution can produce fever in children, the so called "sodium chloride fever."⁶¹

dangerous to give Natrum mur. in acute fevers.

How long all this was to prove, Natrum mur. now stands at the head of remedies for fevers. For this we are indebted to Dr. Bhanu Desai.

Natrum mur. has *severe headache during the chill and fever*. Here it compares with Bell., Cactus, Nux. v. and Sepia. But when the chill subsides the headache remains. This is a feature of Natrum mur. alone.⁶²

When the fever increases the headache increases and when the fever decreases the headache persists. Here it compares with Eup. perf. where the body pains persist after the fever subsides.

With the fever the patient throws off covers (reverse of Nux v.) and asks for water. There may be dry, cracked lips; herpes simplex around the mouth and bitter taste.

Given on these indications the 30th or 200th potency, *when the fever is not rising** does wonders in a few hours. We have seen many patients get well with this remedy.

In treating these acute conditions do not expect to find the constitutional symptoms of Natrum mur. Do not expect a craving for salt or a ceaseless sadness. You need not go into these constitutional tendencies when treating acute cases.

Guernsey⁶³ gives the best description of the Natrum mur. fever: "Intermittent fever with sores on the lips, an excessive thirst before the chill and during the chill, no thirst during the fever or at its close, hammering headache begins, which lasts for a long time after the fever and perspiration have passed away.

Natrum mur. in acute cases: Kanjilal reports a dramatic case of delayed labor. It was a desperate case of shoulder presentation with prolapsed hand. The fluid was out some 24 hours since. The foetus was long dead. The mother was in distress, with high pulse rate. Every question was replied with an irritated grimace. Mouth and tongue were dry as wood, and she was devouring water in glasses. On examination it was found that the vagina also was extremely dry. The patient had a remarkable craving for salt, particularly increased during pregnancy. He gave Natrum mur. 200 and was waiting for the instruments to arrive to perform embryotomy. But in about five minutes a miracle was witnessed. Labor pains increased and a natural labor could be conducted which was finished in 10 minutes.⁶⁵

POSOLOGY

As we have seen in the cases, Natrum mur. seems to work best in higher potencies. This is confirmed by many authorities.

Nash points out that like Lach. and Caust., Natrum mur. is most efficient in the high potencies.⁶⁶ Dr. D. C. Dasgupta writes that the high potencies of Natrum mur. yield the most brilliant results.⁶⁷ Wartekey who reproved

* Natrum mur. should never be given during fever paroxysm.⁶⁴

Natrum mur. says that the maximum symptoms were obtained in high potencies.⁶⁸ Powell declares "I do not think much of it in low potency."⁶⁹

We have also seen in the cases that the effects of Natrum mur. are slow (in chronic cases). Harvey Farrington says that, "Like the deleterious effects from excessive use of common salt, symptoms produced by the potencies develop slowly."⁷⁰

Though Dunham stresses that Natrum mur. cannot be repeated in chronic cases without an intercurrent,⁷¹ we have done this with great benefit to the patient. Balfour warns of aggravation from Natrum mur.⁷² He says that sometime a hydrogen bomb can be mild compared to this aggravation.

We have not come across this aggravation either in practice or in the literature. Gibson stating that low potencies are ineffectual goes on to suggest that to avoid aggravation from high potencies of Natrum mur. we must precede the dose with Helianthus 1C or follow at once with Silicea 30.⁷³

RELATIONSHIP

Natrum mur. and Sepia are complementary remedies. Both come from sea. Sepia must be containing some proportion of salt. Both have similar mental states. They have the depression, weeping, dwelling on past unpleasant events and irritability. Both are worse from consolation. Both have action on the female genital organs. They have the prolapse uteri, painful coitus and troublesome scanty, delayed menstruation.

The differences are as follows:—

| <i>Natrum mur.</i> | <i>Sepia</i> |
|--|--|
| Satiety of life. | Aversion to loved ones. |
| Dwelling on past grievances marked. | Dwelling on past grievances less marked. |
| Weakness and nervous exhaustion predominate, e.g. headache, palpitation, paralytic effects, etc. | Vascular commotions predominate, e.g. flushes of heat, sweat, varicose veins, etc. |
| Dripping. | Drooping. |
| Crack in the middle of lips. | Yellow saddle across nose. |
| Aggravation with sun, forenoon. | No characteristic time modality. |
| | No aggravation with sun. |
| Aggravation from exertion. | Relief from exercise. |

Natrum mur. can be compared to Lycopodium. Some common symptoms are: Startling from noise; violent temper; weak memory, cannot think; headache, morning on waking; increased appetite with easy satiety; impotence; red sand in the urine.⁷⁴

Pulsatilla may sometimes resemble Natrum mur. Both have the change-

able, fearful nature. Both are indicated at puberty and especially in a female.* Both are equally aggravated by the sun. But a deeper examination shows them to be vastly different. Here are few important differences:

| <i>Natrum mur.</i> | <i>Pulsatilla</i> |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Generally irritable. | Generally mild. |
| Strong willed. | Indecisive. |
| Outward aversion to sympathy. | Outward desire for sympathy. |
| Thirsty. | No thirst. |
| Aggravation forenoon. | Aggravation evening. |
| Clear, watery discharges. | Thick yellow-green discharges. |

Ignatia is the acute of *Natrum mur.* Both these remedies are very close. But *Ignatia* is more superficial, short acting. The symptoms common to both are: Sadness; Tearfulness; Nervous; Sensitiveness; Alternation of opposite moods; Hysterical faintness, numbness, and ailments due to strong emotional disturbances; Aggravation from consolation and silent grief.

The differences are only in the degree of the various symptoms:

| <i>Natrum mur.</i> | <i>Ignatia</i> |
|---|---|
| Irritability | Introspection |
| Headache, giddiness, palpitations marked. | Twitchings and jerkings marked. |
| Sadness, aversion to company and consolation more marked. | Contradictory, hysterical symptoms more marked. |

Salt is one of the substances used (empirically) to anti- the poisonous effects of bee stings.⁷⁶ Homoeopathic *Natrum mur.* too is an antidote to the homoeopathic *Apis* as well as being its complementary. Both have oedema, intolerance of heat and afternoon aggravation. The urticaria is also very much similar in both, i.e. worse from warmth.

Bryonia compares well with *Natrum mur.* in acute cases. It has the same irritability, aversion to being disturbed, the severe headache, great dryness, thirst and dry hard stools. There is great aggravation from slight motion in both, besides the cracked lips, bitter taste and aggravation from heat. Here are a few differences between the two in fever:

*Dr. Witzal of Germany says that where the couple wanted a boy, he prescribed *Natrum mur.* 6 for both partners and in most cases, the next birth was a boy. To get female children he gave *Puls.* 6.⁷⁵

| <i>Natrum mur.</i> | <i>Bryonia</i> |
|--|--|
| Headache hammering. | Headache sharp splitting. |
| Headache persists after chill and fever. | Head does not persist after chill and fever. |
| Blisters, vesicles around mouth. | No blisters. |
| Aggravation forenoon. | Slightest motion aggravation. |
| Mapped tongue. | White coated tongue. |

Carcinosin, the cancer nosode, has many features similar to *Natrum mur.* Besides the aggravation or amelioration at seashore, there is craving or aversion to salt in both the remedies. Foubister reports a case of asthma where *Natrum mur.* though indicated failed. Taking history of cancer in the mother, he gave Carcinosis, which greatly benefited. Gordon Ross used Carcinosis in children with heart disease whose mothers were *natrum mur.* patients.¹⁷ Thus there is a close association between the two.

A useful hint from Hahnemann: "Kali carb. brings on menses when *Natrum mur.* though indicated, fails".

Natrum mur. antidotes *Argentum nitricum*. Even chemically salt is the best antidote for silver nitrate poisoning, because it converts it into harmless silver chloride¹⁸. *Natrum mur.* has been used in ophthalmia treated previously with silver nitrate. Sarabhai points out that most hair dyes contain silver nitrate. He reasons that some amount of the silver nitrate must be entering and poisoning the system and hence *Natrum mur.* should be considered as an antidote for this in people who use the dyes.

Natrum mur. is antidoted by *Ars.*, *Phos.*, *Sep.*, *Nux v.* and *Nitri spiritus dulcis*.

Natrum Muriaticum

| Complements | Follows well after | Antidotes | Antidoted by |
|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|
| <i>Sepia</i> | <i>Ignatia</i> | <i>Arg.n.</i> | <i>Nit. s. d.</i> |
| <i>Phosphorus</i> | <i>Apis</i> | <i>Chin.s.</i> ¹⁹ | <i>Ars.</i> |
| <i>Carcinosin</i> | <i>Bryonia</i> | | <i>Phos.</i> |
| | | | <i>Sep., Nux v.</i> |

PRECIS (A Pinch of Salt)

Any remedy consists basically of numerous seemingly unrelated, discrete symptoms. To form a picture, one has to find some connecting links between these symptoms. This paper is an attempt at such a study.

We have to connect the symptoms of the remedy by various methods.

First, by the use of imagination, we have compared the characteristics of *Natrum mur.* to the ocean.

Secondly, we have derived the locations and sensations from the physiologic role of salt.

Thirdly, we have explained the symptoms in terms of the effects of hyponatremia and hypernatremia.

Fourthly, we have accounted for the general features in terms of two hormonal syndromes—hypoadrenalism and hyperthyroidism.

Fifthly, we have picked up the central strand of the remedy, the disturbance in water metabolism and evolved the various effects on that basis.

Another strand which we picked up is the contradictory nature of the remedy. The modalities and desires and aversions are exposed in that light.

After bringing the symptoms together in such a manner, we went on to study the mind of Natrum mur. We have brought out some apparent contradictions within its nature. We have added a repertorial study to complete the picture.

We have illustrated the study with a few cases to show the application of symptoms in practice. We have then added a note on posology.

Finally, we have completed the exposition with a review of some important relationships.

A small poem, summarising the effects of Natrum mur. will not be out of place:

Oh salt!
You move the seas,
The deep blue sea
And the sea within me.

Without you
The flow is stopped,
Too much somewhere
Too little elsewhere.

The mind
Stops flowing is dammed;
Waves upward and downward
And finally reverts backward.

The muscles
Which you move, stop moving,
Get cramped, become weakened,
Look thin, feel shorteued.

Come Salt!
Move the muscles, free the mind,
Make the fluids move again,
Make life flow again.

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