

EXOPHTHALMIC GOITRE

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The German physician Basedow was the first authority who in 1848 gave an exact description of exophthalmic goitre. He described the following three characteristic symptoms: (1) goggle-eyes or exophthalmos, (2) enlargement of the thyroid gland, (3) disorders of the circulatory organs, especially of the heart. We know by now, that these essential symptoms may be missing in some cases. Regarding the circulatory organs, the most remarkable symptom is the rapidity of the pulse. There may be up to 200 beats in a minute, especially after mental excitement or great physical strain. It is always coupled with irregularity of the pulse, shortness of breath and spasms of the heart. In many cases the heart is enlarged, its sounds unclear. Other parts of the circulatory system become involved too. The small blood vessels of the skin, especially of the face enlarge. A deep redness of the face appears after even the slightest mental excitement. Profuse bleeding from nose, lungs, bowels or stomach may occur.

Regarding the second symptom, i.e. enlargement of the thyroid gland. It may be absent in some cases, although it is noticeable in the majority of cases. The enlargement may be inborn, it may even develop during childhood, but as a rule it develops only in a progressive stage of the disease. In acute cases the enlargement develops simultaneously with the other symptoms and that within a few hours. The swelling, which is due to the dilatation and winding of the blood vessels, is characterized by pulsation and certain distinctly audible noises. By putting the finger over the swelling we frequently feel a characteristic whirring. In the later period of the disease the enlargement solidifies through calcareous deposits. This enlargement develops in some cases behind the breast bone. Though invisible, it is usually a very dangerous condition as it is liable to compress the big blood vessels.

Regarding the third symptom, i.e. goggle-eyes. This symptom is the least essential. As a rule it develops simultaneously with the heart troubles, in other cases, again, it is the very first symptom of the disease. On the whole both eyes are affected.

In exceptional cases one eye only is affected. Due to the protrusion of the eyeballs, the mobility of the eyes becomes limited. The eyelids no longer cover the eyeballs entirely, thus inflammation of the cornea with all its serious consequences develop (ulceration, dimness and diminished strength of vision).

Accessory symptoms

(1) Digestive disorders: profuse, painless diarrhoea, coupled, in some cases, with vomiting; it appears periodically and is often complicated by jaundice; the appetite is increased.

(2) Respiratory system. There are cough-paroxysms, called larynx crises. There is little expectoration, sometimes coupled with impediment in the

patient's speech. The respiration is accelerated, attacks of real asthma with bleeding are frequent.

(3) Urinary system: the urine is remarkably increased in quantity (polyuria), in some cases sugar is to be found in the urine (glycosuria).

(4) The skin: profuse perspiration, especially at night, often accompanied by a feeling of heat. The skin is anaemic, but flushes after the slightest excitement. Pigmentation of the skin is frequent. The hair is getting grey prematurely and is falling out.

(5) The muscles: paralysis, often coupled with trembling of hands and fingers, is a frequent symptom. It may attack either some limbs or some groups of muscles.

(6) Mental symptoms: giddiness, sleeplessness, headache, grievousness, diminution of intelligence, great irritability, unnatural cheerfulness and carelessness with regard to their own condition, sprightliness alternating with deep depression, low spirits and indifference are common symptoms. They are, as a rule, accompanied by a remarkable anaemia, cachexy and high temperature.

HOMŒOPATHIC TREATMENT

The drug pictures of Iodine and Thyroidin cover nearly all symptoms of the disease. They should therefore be considered first.

(1) Iodine. The likeness of Iodine and exophthalmic goitre is striking. Both show the same mental symptoms such as irritability, excitability and restlessness. They show the same permanent feeling of heat, the same peculiar yellowish complexion, vomiting and diarrhoea; in addition both have the same heart symptoms, sleeplessness, perspiration and anxiety, aggravated when sitting down, better when occupied and walking.

To avoid aggravation, Iodine should be given in high potencies only, and at great intervals. I usually give Iodine 200x once in a fortnight.

As a rule we had better give instead of pure iodine, the following plants which contain iodine:

Badiaga 6x twice a day in cases characterized by palpitation of the heart, due to joyful excitement, general weakness, coupled with pains in the forehead, radiating towards the eyes, aggravated in the afternoon.

Fucus 4x twice a day in cases with enlarged, indurated thyroid gland.

Hedera helix 4x twice a day in cases of indurated, enlarged thyroid gland, associated with pains in the heart, stiffness of all joints, improved in fresh air.

Spongia 6x twice a day in cases of goggle-eyes and enlarged thyroid gland, coupled with biting pains in the heart, in the eyes, weeping.

Finally, we may prescribe Iodine in the shape of chemical compounds such as Arsenicum iodatum 6x, Aurum iodatum 6x, or Baryum iodatum 6x, in accordance with the modalities of the special patient.

(2) Thyroidin and exophthalmic goitre have the following key symptoms in common: Sleeplessness, giddiness, headache, goggle-eyes, depression, irrit-

ability of the heart, rapid and weak pulse. Patient is unable to lie down, urine increased, often with deposits of albumin and sugar. Thyroidin, like Iodine, should be given in high potencies and in long intervals only. I prefer Thyroidin 100x once in a month, and I combine it with other drugs, indicated by special symptoms.

On the whole I prescribed *Lycopus virginicus* 4x, alternating with *Ferrum sulph.* 4x twice a day. These two drugs are especially indicated in cases, characterized by heart symptoms. Their modalities are improvement by cold, rest and laying down, aggravated by moving about and during the night. Many other drugs should be considered. I mention.

Adonis vernalis 4x: Heart symptoms, depression, pains radiating towards the left hand, irregular pulse. Constipation, alternating with diarrhoea, great restlessness.

Asarum europoeum 3x alternating the *Nasturtium* 2x: Nervous excitement, headache, irritability of the heart.

Belladonna 12x: Enlarged pupils, very hot face, perspiration aggravated at night; palpitation of the heart improved by rest, very rapid pulse, jumping eyelids, very dry.

Cactus grandiflorus 2x: Pains and feeling of compression in the heart.

Calcareo phos. 6x alternating with *Jaborandum* 4x: Great weakness, due to profuse perspiration.

Convallaria majalis 4x: Great weakness of the heart, anguish, burning sensation over the whole body, perspiration.

Ephedra 3x: Serious headache, apathy, very slow pulse, goggle-eye, accelerated metabolism.

Glonoin 30x: Irregular pulse, palpitation of the heart, serious headache, aggravated by sunshine, better when moving about.

Kalmia 2x: Palpitation of the heart, rheumatic pains, feeling of deafness and weakness.

Natrum muriaticum 12x: Undernourished patients, livid complexion, melancholy, hopelessness, sleeplessness, aggravated at the seaside. Rapid pulse.

Strophanthus 3x: Serious pains behind the breastbone, very rapid pulse, palpitation of the heart, intense anguish.

Yohimbin 30x: Goggle-eyes, great weakness of the genital organs.

DIETETIC TREATMENT

A strict vegetarian diet with plenty of uncooked green salads and fruit should be given at least in acute cases. When the patient's condition has improved, he may eat meat, such as veal, chicken, pigeon and fresh-water fish. Mutton, pork, goose, duck, game, seafish, pickled fish and tinned meats, however, are prohibited. The amount of liquid food should be restricted. Furthermore, spirit, coffee, tea, strong spice and tobacco are strictly forbidden. Herbal tea, such as Adinolan tea, should be the daily beverage.

ACCESSORY MEASURES

All kinds of general physical and hygienic measures and psychical treatment should be resorted to. Bodily repose is of the greatest importance. In light cases we may restrict ourselves to the prohibition of overwork. In serious cases, however, we should insist upon confinement to bed, at least for several hours of the day.

OPERATIVE TREATMENT

It may become necessary if the thyroid gland compresses the trachea to such a degree that suffocation may be imminent. Such a condition occurs sometimes during pregnancy. Here the pregnancy must be interrupted at once.

Furthermore, we should always consult with an experienced surgeon in cases where, in spite of the most careful homoeopathic treatment, the condition of the patient did not show any sign of improvement, but even became more serious still. I remember such cases where the operation finally cured the patient.

—*Heal Thyself*, June 1947