

HYPERTENSION

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I do not write or speak of hypertension as a disease. It is not. More often it is a manifestation of a disease which is developing or has developed in some part of the body and nature takes this way of trying to overcome it.

We measure hypertension in millimeters of mercury. But when we have found that the blood pressure measures excessively high or low, we should not conclude that this measurement is the final word in prognosis. We may find that just some simple measure may bring the mercury to normal.

Hypertension may be considered as normal in adults between 105 and 145 systole. However, many cases may be very comfortable without any disturbance as high as 170 systole.

Many authorities classify hypertension as arterio-sclerotic or cardiovascular and cardiorenal with one other type, called essential, in which no disturbance of the system is found and the cause also is not found. Perhaps this is as good a classification as any, but the causes of hypertension are many, and to make a permanent cure this must be found and eradicated.

Thus, faulty metabolism or conditions which interfere with the proper carrying out of chemical problems of the body are a common cause; also, anything which produces a long-continued hyperacidity of the blood is another; and I have felt that kidney dysfunction, either in the form of interstitial nephritis or just a mild, acute attack of the parenchymatous form, which leaves a sluggish acting kidney afterwards, is a very common cause of a grave type. Women in a large percentage of cases develop hypertension at the menopause, but it is not permanent. Grief, worry, and mental strain will frequently produce it, and long-continued, brooding anger will end in cancer or hypertension with frequent attacks of coronary trouble. All of these causes must be considered in the treatment of hypertension together with a legion of other conditions.

I have a young woman, thirty-four years old, the mother of ten children, who has had a systolic of 220 for more than two years. Her urine is frequently loaded with albumen. I was unable to modify this tension by medication or diet, so sent her to a state hospital. They could not help her either—in fact, sent her home to die. Recently her heart became very painful and pericarditis developed. The symptoms called for *Spigelia*, which was given. This remedy not only relieved the pericarditis but has lowered the blood pressure to normal.

April 12, this patient suddenly developed a very serious condition, and we found she was pregnant.

To save her life an abortion was performed, which she went through with nicely.

Spigelia is still indicated and we hope it will continue the improvement.

Old P.B. is one of the most cantankerous farmers who ever drew a breath, but he can entertain you for hours with preposterous lies without hurting anyone. His family is just a burden to society and to the old man a vexation of spirit. No wonder P.B.'s blood turned to acid and his tension soared to 240. Rheumatism developed, the arteries hardened, but the urine remained good. *Rhododendron*, *Rhus tox.*, and *Bryonia* each was given at times with much benefit to the rheumatism, but, when the prostate began to retard the flow, *Staphisagria* bobbed up as the remedy and much to our surprise the prostate was completely relieved and the blood pressure came to normal. *Staphisagria* is the remedy for slowraging fires in the mind.

No doubt many of you have your favourite remedy for blood pressure. I too had one which I thought was nearly specific but when old B.C. developed H.B.P.—well, you see old Bill was a favourite, a pioneer, an old gold miner; came to Colorado before they dug the Platte River and refused to wear anything but the old five-gallon Stetson. His arteries were hardening, his knees were getting stiff, but the old black pipe still functioned. *Viscum alb.* was my specific then and poor old Bill got it in five-drop doses. The blood pressure would go down, then the heart would become irregular, and his breathing would be difficult. I know now that *Baryta carb.* was indicated, but I was cocksure I had a specific. *Crataegus* was given for the irregular heart. One evening poor old Bill developed coronary trouble at his ranch home. They put him in a car, but in less than a mile Old Bill crossed the divide. Died with his boots and his ten-gallon hat on, a victim of a doctor's hobby, a sure cure for hypertension.

This experience broke my deadlock on a sure cure. I now look for the cause: bad teeth, bad tonsils, gall-bladder infection, enlarged prostate, or just any infection, and correct it if possible. But I also look for the indicated remedy. There are certain remedies which are more often indicated, but any remedy in the *materia medica* may be one.

Theominal, 5 grains, alone or with phenobarbital is the favourite of the dominant school just now. It is far more harmful than my *Viscum* and sudden changes must be looked for in its use.

Aconite where the patient is nervous and afraid. Patient often turns pale on sitting up; the heart is beginning to be involved, especially pericarditis, and the pulse is fast.

Belladonna apt to have involvement of the liver. The face flushes and pupils are dilated at such times. There is a severe headache, which is better by sitting up. I have never found *Belladonna* of much use in actual atherosclerosis except where some other condition, such as liver trouble, is raising the blood pressure. It is frequently of use in hypertension due to change of life.

Veratrum vir., according to Boericke, will induce a fall in both systolic and diastolic blood pressure. Here also the face is flushed and the eyes are bloodshot. The patient is dizzy and frequently sees double. Contrary to *Bella-*

donna, he can't hold his head up. His pulse also is slow and often weak—just opposite to Belladonna. I have found Veratrum to be a very useful remedy, but it cannot be used only a day or two until pain develops in the heart from weakened muscles.

Calc. fluor. for actual arteriosclerosis, pipestem arteries, stony hard glands, aneurysm, also varicose conditions. Frequently syphilitic or tubercular base. Like Rhus tox. it is better by motion and worse with change of weather. I have never seen Calc. fluor. complete a cure, but it helps.

Baryta carb. in advanced age. Vascular degeneration is taking place. Frequently we find hypertrophied prostates, scrofulous diathesis, old catarrhs, and foot sweats. Where the heart flutters or is irregular with indigestion, Baryta is needed; in other words, in impending coronary occlusion. Baryta is slow in action but will keep them alive for years.

Viscum alb. will lower blood pressure in the rheumatic, asthmatic type—albuminuria from hypertension. During attacks can't lie down, heart feels like hand were squeezing it—similar to Cactus. Will lower many cases but must be followed by Crataegus.

Crataegus for the heart muscle degeneration, dropsy, aortic insufficiency, insomnia, arteriosclerosis. Can't lie on the left side. Better by rest and quiet.

Cactus grand. for atheromatous arteries, weak heart, fluttering and jumpy. There is often a sense of constriction, not only in the heart but it may be in the throat, in the stomach, or in an arm or leg. They can't stand the heat, worse about 11 a.m. Degeneration has been going on some time; may be due to toxic goitre or sunstroke. I have found Cactus of benefit for hypertension cases where they have moved from a low altitude to a higher one.

I see no reason why any remedy if indicated will not relieve hypertension, but except for the transitory cases don't promise a cure. They must be kept under observation. They should visit you at least once a month for a check-up. All conditions tending to cause it must be treated and relieved if possible. The diet is the difficult matter. They love to eat. Generally all meat should be stopped, except occasionally a little white meat of chicken or a lamb chop may be allowed. Coffee and tea will not do at all, but whey may be used as a substitute. I have found whey very fine in degenerative diseases and also tuberculosis. Whole wheat bread and as many raw vegetables as possible. Cabbage I prohibit; also fried food of any kind. Plenty of raw and cooked fruits. Above anything else know your grape-fruit. An exclusive diet for three days of Texas grape-fruit juice and water will lower hypertension cases to normal, then careful regulation of diet and medicine may keep it there. But demand of all your cases a monthly check-up.

—*Journal of the American Institute of Homoeopathy*, April 1940
