

## THE PANCREAS

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Only the other day I came across a remark by Raymond Mortimer, "The venom with which succeeding historians have treated Macaulay is easily comprehensible. He committed the sin that to professional men is unforgivable, he opened the arcana to the general public."

Thinking over this remark it partially explains medical jargon, medical bad writing, and the fact that our profession does not encourage medical articles for the lay public.

In spite of this professional peevishness I think it a good thing that we homœopaths take an interest in our health and I propose doing a small series on the ductless glands and I shall start with the pancreas.

The ductless glands produce the hormones in the body, and when those hormones are out of balance we get all kinds of disharmony.

The first thing to notice about the pancreas is that it is not really a ductless gland at all as it contains two ducts one of which is scarcely functional. Down the main duct some digestive ferments, an alkaline secretion of complicated constituency, which mixes with the bile juice in a common chamber known as the Ampulla of Vater, then enters the gut at the duodenum.

The pancreas lies behind the stomach, shaped like a pennant, and is attached to the duodenal loop on its inner border. Its true function as a ductless gland however, is to produce insulin from the Islets of Langerhans in the tail, and this insulin has the peculiar property of reducing the blood sugar.

Insulin is carried from the pancreas by the bloodstream. So naturally, the pancreas has a very adequate blood supply. It also has a very complicated nerve supply and a quite unbelievable power of recuperation, for Nature is careful of regenerative processes in single organs.

## OTHER INFLUENCES

The pancreas is influenced by other ductless glands and is in close connection with the liver, the pituitary, the suprarenals and, to a lesser extent, the thyroid and this connection is largely a hormonal one through the bloodstream.

When there is a failure of insulin production there is a rise in the blood sugar and the patient becomes excessively thirsty, loses weight and passes vast quantities of urine. This is diabetes, which means a running through; and one of the greatest advances in medicine was the discovery of how to extract insulin from the bovine pancreas in 1921. This was done by Drs. Banting and Best, working in Canada, and since their discovery that such insulin, given by injection, was able to reduce the blood sugar, many millions of lives have been saved.

It is not known yet why some patients should suddenly take diabetes, but the failure of the Islet cells is a defect which sometimes runs in families. If the diabetes is inherited it is never so severe as the type arriving out of the blue, and the sufferers can look forward to a long and useful life provided they watch their carbohydrate intake.

If diabetes happens for the first time in patients over 60 years of age they require very little insulin and often none at all, provided the diet is reasonable.

## EXCESSIVE WEIGHT OR WORRY

It is thought that excessive weight throws an extra strain on the pancreas and renders a patient more liable to diabetes in middle age, but the pancreas can also be affected by worry or by blockage of the main drainage duct or at the outlet chamber, where a stone may lodge from the gall-bladder. It is important to note however, that if the external secretion is blocked the patient rarely develops diabetes as insulin comes from the internal secretion.

From the standpoint of the homœopath modern medicine is coming more and more to realise that health means balance and that disease means disharmony.

Dr. M. L. Tyler write *Pointers to Some Remedies* and under Pancreas she lists *Phosphorus*, *Iodum*, *Spongia*, *Iris versicolor*, *Conium*, *Parotidinum*, *Typhinum* and *Mercurius iod. rub.*

Of this group of remedies she instances, *Phosphorus* as being the greatest of the pancreatic remedies. One cannot however, be a good homœopathic prescriber and prescribe for a single organ in the body. *Phosphorus* will not act in everyone, only in the tall, slender, redheaded types whom someone has said "rather resemble a match."

#### ALWAYS THE SIMILAR REMEDY

This applies to all these remedies, and the prescriber could only hope to get a good result with *Spongia* for instance, if the patient happened to have the thyroid gland affected first and be the worrying type of person already referred to.

The prescriber must see the patient as a whole, and treat the presented symptoms accordingly. He must take into consideration the various modalities, and often what might be taken to be a disturbance of the pancreas turns out to be a gall-stone colic, where the remedy might be *Belladonna*, *Chelidonium*, or *Lycopodium*, or another group of remedies altogether.

A true pancreatitis is an abdominal catastrophe, often difficult to distinguish from the perforation of an ulcer. It is characterised by one of the most severe pains possible to experience, and requires the most expert care and nursing. If the patient does recover it is the fat digestion which suffers most.

—*The Homœopathy*, May, 1958.