

A COMPARISON OF ARSENICUM, NITRIC ACID, HEPAR SULPH AND NUX VOMICA

Compiled by Dr. Margery Blackie from the Lecture Notes of
DR. DOUGLAS BORLAND

ARSENICUM

Appearance

Rather thin, rather pale, rather lined, fair or dark, anxious, worried, fearful sort of person. Mental anxiety with sadness, suicidal tendencies.

Pretty quick movements, walks across floor rapidly. Takes rapid look round room, all alive.

When they sit down definitely fidgety. Don't sit calmly down and wait for you to talk—they've got a tale to tell and start right off. Hands very cold and dry.

Comes in definitely on spot—Tells story punctuated with extreme worry and anxiety. Thinks they have got something definite and serious or they may be hopeless and rather despairing. Thinks it's rather hopeless telling you about it. Impossible for you to do them any good.

General

Over-sensitive to all surroundings, smell, touch, hair combing, but particularly to all circumstances in which they live, finicky about their personal appearance, house, etc., over-anxious about everything—"gold headed cane".

Headaches periodical (*China*).

Alternation of states, headache with rheumatism. Tendency to shrivel, lips, skin, mucous membranes.

Pain very intense, throbbing, burning—often starts root of nose and spreads over head. Head tender and hair sensitive with pain <<touch or pressure. Hypersensitive to smell, particularly smell of food <during headache. If food taken as headache begins to subside will often bring it back. >cold applications at once. <a short time after.

Mentals

Practically afraid of anything and apt to panic at night. <alone. *All* <alone. <dark, <1-2 a.m. or p.m. Not quite so bad if there is a light. Not only fear for themselves but for everyone connected with them. If relations late, sure they're run over—certain everything going wrong—if anyone coming to stay, dinner will never turn out properly. Full of apprehension and dread. All impulsive to some extent. In *Ars.* impulses come under stress and work up into acute state of apprehension. Sometimes can't stand it any longer and it drives them to suicide.

Distressing thoughts which distress him—fearful, depressing. At first can

put off these thoughts by talking to someone, so always desires company, but later fear and depression may be constant.

Time aggravation

Early afternoon 1-2; early morning 1-2 or 3.

Typical *Arsen.* headache <after lunch, <into night—periodic sick headaches—periodicity.

Worries, fears, nervous symptoms <early morning.

Respiratory distress <early a.m.

Food reactions

Liking for fat slight in *Arsen.* Patient at times dislikes fat and aversion to fat may be common in *Arsen.* patients.

Poor appetite and if depressed gastric upset.

Loathe any food and sight or smell of food, and it will probably make them vomit. Off all food at once in gastritis.

Arsen. thirst for frequent sips typical in acute case. In children may not be thirsty at all. Definite desire for sour things, coffee and very often for milk. Also particularly sensitive to anything that isn't quite fresh. Something that most people can take will upset *Ars.* May be upset by watery or juicy fruit—melons, pears. Causes diarrhoea—not good on vegetarian diet. Digestive upset from vegetables and iced food in hot weather. <any alcohol.

Diarrhoea

Wrinkled, pallid, restless, with great prostration, lips dry, cracked, intense thirst, vomiting after food or drink (*Alæs, Crot., Tig.*). Prostration with profuse sweat after stool. Stool offensive, fluid, any colour, small and scanty. Redness and excoriation round anus. Code before and during stool with burning pain in rectum.

Chilliness and faintness and collapse after.

Food and Likes

Susceptible to smoking, and if *Ars.* headache produced patient will tell you about it.

Swallowing

Tendency for food to stick, choke, cough and splutter and food comes up.

Temperature

All chilly but in *Arsen.* deep sensitiveness to cold in any form.

Aggravation dry or wet cold.

Skin itches and burns and after rubbing the itching goes but burning remains.

Pain

Wants *head cold* in congestive headache but if *pain neuralgic* <<cold.
Arsen. characteristic only. Burning pains all over.

Pains of body >wrapping up and warmth.

All secretions and excretions acrid, cause excoriation and burning.

Putrid offensive sputum, nasal discharge, etc.

Arsen. flu. Pouring water from nose, excoriating sneezing from irritation in one spot, always taking cold from changes in weather and sneezing. Begin in nose → chest—chilly <draughts (*Hep.*).

Freezing, hugs fire (*Nux*). Chilly with burning, >heat, restless, anxious, icecold blood through vessels, or boiling water through vessels. Asthma type of cough, dry, hacking, no expectoration.

*NITRIC ACID**Appearance*

Definitely dark, alive, rather vital type. Usually thin. Come in with flush and after sitting go quite pale. Certain pigmentation shows up, freckles stand out, dark rings under eyes. Often brown or dark black brown eyes—not always.

Mentally active, look very much on spot and give very definite answers. Characterized by certain acute anxiety but nothing like *Ars*.

Not sure they've got definite illness. Don't imagine they've got this, that and the other thing. Rather anxious about health and fear they're going to die, feel ill but don't specify any special illness. Tired and often overworked. More despairing state than anxious.

General

Headache post railway journey. Acute pressing all over head. >taking off hat, >cold air, >lying, <<noise, particularly voices. Flushes of heat in head and neck with pain. Particularly sensitive to physical disturbances—very sensitive to pain as in hip—pain upsets them out of all reason. Very sensitive to touch—irritable. May go on to more a sullen vindictive anger and abnormally obstinate. "The most hard-working people." Particularly sensitive to noise and any jarring—very much upset if they don't get regular quota of sleep. Very irritable.

Mentals

Always has certain amount of fear and it's a deep fear of death. Not so impulsive.

Time Aggravation

Definite nightly aggravation. All fever <night. May sweat. T.B. <night-sweats, etc.

Food reactions

Desires fat but may get aggravation from taking it. Go on taking fat in spite of aggravation and being very upset. Much the same desires as *Hepar*. Things with definite bite to them—curry, pickles, etc. Have never met desire for chalk of text books.

Aversion to bread and meat and very often definite aversion to milk—more that it upsets them than not liking taste. Turns sour immediately. Not surprising that they dislike sweets. Complains often of sweet taste in mouth. Definitely <after food. Doesn't help them at all.

Swallowing

With *Hepar* same—choking, sticking pain.

Temperature

Almost as chilly as *Hepar*. Definitely <cold weather, wet or dry. May get sudden intolerance of heat, ∴ patient perspires so profusely.

Pain

Pains exactly as in *Hepar*.

Peculiarly pungent ammoniacal odour.

Flu and cough. One of fish bone in, throat remedies. Swallowing difficult.

Distorts face.

Swallowing fluid causes pain into ear (*Phyto*). Suddenly appearing and slowly creeping ulcers in mouth.

Large deep ulcer.

Very chilly, loves salt and fat, depressed and anxious. Pains splinter-like, <touch.

HEPAR SULPH*Appearance*

Tend to be thin and fair rather than dark. Look as if they haven't been well for some time. Pale or have less colour than you'd expect—look tired. None of the anxiety of *Ars*. patient. Very often given you the impression they have come against their will. Resentful when you start asking questions. Sink into chair as if physically tired—none of alertness of *Arsen*. None of physical restlessness of *Arsen*.

Hands very cold and rather clammy. Comes with definite depression but the impression given is that patient is up against things, that they are dissatisfied with conditions, rather fed up than fearful. Complains of being out of health due to conditions under which he works—if he could only change his job. He goes over past continually, but if he changes surroundings >for a bit, then goes back again.

General

Tendency to suppuration. Tendency to catarrhal states of mucous mem-

branes. Loses voice—hoarse from being out in cold wind. Marked cutaneous hyperæsthesia especially to touch and draught, but also a very marked sensitiveness to personal atmosphere—a person is like a red rag to a bull with them. Exhibition of temper when with certain people—quite ungoverned in fit of temper—kick, swear, upset by slightest thing. Quarrelsome, impulsive.

Mentals

Nothing like *Arsen.* fear. Too bad tempered to be afraid much. Reaction more one of irritability than anxiety.

Impulsiveness more suicidal—if annoyed sufficiently and suddenly will get sudden impulse to kill. Mother looking after child will turn round and hit it with anything handy. May break an arm—may sometimes kill.

Children who lose temper and hit and kick and do real damage.

Times of Aggravation

<morning and evening—no definite hour.

a.m. aggravation on waking. Respiratory symptoms <catarrh symptoms of all kinds—nasal, laryngeal. In evening <6-7 p.m. to midnight. May get cough aggravation then.

Food reactions

Very common to find them with aversion to fats although they may want them. Always want something with very strong taste. Article not important but must have something with very strong taste—pickles, herring, etc. Deep desire for sour things. Likes wine, particularly sour dry wine. *Ars.* <p.c. and *Nit. Acid* <p.c. *Hepar* patient > food. Say they feel > after.

Swallowing

Feeling of something stuck and painful. Ulcers of soft palate—loss of voice, choking, uneasiness.

Temperature

Extremely sensitive to cold, the most chilly patient feels slightest draught; <hand out of bed, even warm draught in summer. Aggravates any condition from which suffering—cough to aches and pains. <particularly cold dry weather. >damp weather.

Pain

Pains always stabbing, stitching, jabbing of sharp sticks, and pretty well the same whatever part of body involved. Always <cold. Eruptions sensitive to touch and have jabbing pain.

Sour smell adolescence. Sweating. Baby smells sour in spite of washing.

Flu and colds. Dry teasing cough, very tearing sore chest. Very hot but cannot move or uncover without feeling chilly. <cold dry weather. <breath-

ing cold air, <putting hand out of bed. Suffocative croupy cough. Sweating without relief.

NUX VOMICA

Appearance

Two types—may be fair, dark or anything.

1. Very intelligent, slow, studious, weary looking patient, who looks as if he sat up all night reading—slow, slouching, abdomen sticking out—looks thoroughly miserable. Or

2. Well brushed up. Comes in hearty, full of life—quite cheerful about the day and news, etc.

Both sallow. When talking both get a bit excited and both flush up—a dusky flush—not bright red.

Goes back to sallow often rather wrinkled skin—lined faces—not same degree of pigmentation as *Nit. acid* but a bit dark under eyes. Very little depression—anxiety usually associated with things outside themselves—work, friends, financial future, rather than health.

Certain things very similar to *Nitric acid*. When tired, get into hopeless anxiety state and then fed up with everything in general.

All four drugs have definite hyperæsthesia but it affects them in different ways.

Nux Never contented.

General

Tendency to twitchings, convulsions, paralyses, etc.

Tendency for actions to be turned in opposite directions, anti-peristalsis—in constipation the more he strains the more difficult to pass. Urine dribbles but stops on straining—vomiting difficult.

More cutaneous sensitiveness than others. Not so much to pain but a state of irritability from cold touch, noise, being interfered with in any way—easily startled by touch, nerves all on edge—if startled turn round and curse you—very impatient. If they ask anyone to do something, can't wait for it—if doing anything for themselves, won't persevere, throws it up. None of obstinacy of *Nit. acid*. Anger from consolation. Thought of doing anything exhausts him when apparently perfectly well.

Mentals

More definite anxiety—business anxiety. Certain amount of anxiety about health. None of the acute fear of *Arsen*.

Nothing of same kind as in *Arsen.* and *Hepar.*

Time of Aggravation

Aggravation 3-4 a.m. Most acute distress then. Goes to sleep and wakes about 3 very uncomfortable. Often lies awake then, thinking and worrying

and drops off when nearly time to get up. When they wake again feel rotten—headachy—horrible taste—uncomfortable in chest or tummy.

Food reactions

Likes fat and digests it well. Particular craving for pick-me-up—frequenter of cocktail bar and not only drink cocktails but apt to taste everything at the bar—always with feeling of wanting a pick-me-up.

Definite meat aggravation and milk turns sour. Usually peculiarly susceptible to coffee—sleepless night, and talking of cold food may give them attack of abdominal pain. Definitely > a little food but only want a little. If they eat more feel full and heavy in stomach and yawny, and it doesn't really do them much good. Sensation of stone in stomach an hour p.c. Tendency for all four to get disturbance in power of swallowing—actual sensation different in each case.

Swallowing

Gets food down a good way and then feels uncomfortable. Large mass struck a long way down cesophagus then returns, as if peristaltic action had gone wrong—not connected with pain.

Temperature

Particularly < cold dry weather and definitely > damp weather. Sweats easily, then least current of air causes coryza and headache.

Tendency to jaundice in all febrile conditions.

Headache

Alcoholic headache of morning after. < before getting up.

< mental exertion. < working chilly, heavy in head. *Constipation.*

Pain

Typical pain spasmodic cramping pain and here again doesn't matter where it is. Most useful drug for Hepatic colic (*Coloc.—Mag. phos.*) *Nux* colic << motion >> heat, << pressure (*Coloc.* > press).

Backache < lying, can't turn over in bed.

Pressing pains in tummy with desire for stool with each pain.

Odour—nothing particular.

Cough. Can't move without feeling chilly.

Teasing cough, very sore. May retch—spasmodic cough (*Dros. Rumex*). Tickling and pain in larynx. Acute catarrhal laryngitis—asthma, whooping cough—something torn loose in chest. Cold in nose > chest.

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