

## THE IMPORTANCE OF HOST ORIENTED SYSTEM OF TREATMENT

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A deviation from a state of complete physical, mental or social well-being is termed as disease, and the diseased condition is perceptible in the diseased individual through signs and symptoms. It is these signs and symptoms for which the patient comes to the physician to be freed from his sufferings, to be treated.

Treatment provides relief to the patient and may be of three kinds:

(1) Preventive treatment.

(2) Symptomatic treatment which is directed only to the relief of the symptoms temporarily. It is only preferred in incurable diseases to make death an easy and a painless one. But in diseases that are curable it is hardly of any value.

(3) Radical treatment in which the object is to cure the patient of his disease by the removal of the cause.

Now for the treatment to be radical it is very important to know the cause of the disease, for health can only be restored after the cause has been removed.

As to the cause of the disease there is a conflict between the various existing systems of treatment, each has a different concept of the cause of the disease.

Starting with the most dominant system, generally called Allopathy, it considers that diseases are caused by causative organisms which may be bacteria, fungus, protozoa, arthropoda or helminths, which gain entry into the body by some means and cause the disease within the human body (host) and to achieve cure removal or annihilation of above mentioned causative organisms is required. In diseases where no causative organism can be isolated the treatment there is symptomatic.

The concept of the ayurvedic system of medicine is that in health, within the body there is a harmony between the constituents *vatha*, *pitta* and *kapha* each balancing the other; when the balance between these three constituents is altered the body becomes diseased and the disease is manifested by signs and symptoms depending on the altered ratio of *vatha*, *pitta* and *kapha*. It is only after this altered state the external agencies (bacteria etc.) can invade the body and produce pathogenesis.

Another prevalent system is the homoeopathic system of treatment and the concept of disease here is different (although slightly similar to Ayurveda). In this system the micro-organisms, (bacteria, fungus etc.) present at the site of the disease are the result of the disease and not the cause

of the disease. The disease is considered to lie somewhere deeper, in the vital force. The disease appears only when this vital force is deranged.

The concept of vital force was elaborated by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, the founder of the homoeopathic system of medicine. He described vital force as a spiritual, dynamic and an invisible force within the human body which is responsible for all the life activities occurring within the living body and when this vital (life) force is deranged (disturbed) the biological equilibrium of the body is disturbed and it is only after this that the micro-organisms are able to multiply and produce lesions (tissue changes). Dr. Rene J. Dubos of Rockefeller Institute after extensive research and experience seemed to have reached the same conclusion when he said, "Medicine may have gone too far in blaming germs, that bacteria and viruses become dangerous only when the set up is fixed for them, otherwise even the most virulent of them are harmless. Every person carries in the body throughout life a host of virulent microbes which live in blood and tissues as harmless until *something* happens to start them on rampage."

This something of Dr. Rene J. Dubos had been described so many years ago by Dr. Hahnemann as the deranged vital force.

Dr. Dubos' statement can be explained from the following examples. The nose is the natural home of Staph. aureus and this organism can be isolated from about 50% of nasal swabs taken from normal healthy persons. Similarly, about the throat viridans streptococci, N. catarrhalis and staphylococcus normally occur.

And it is these very bacteria that are responsible for innumerable number of diseases, e.g. Staph. aureus produces pustule, boil, carbuncle, impetigo, osteomyelitis and severe pneumonia; viridans streptococci is held responsible for SABE (sub acute bacterial endocarditis).

Thus, we see that the bacteria which are normally present in the healthy individual are the cause of so many diseases.

The statement can further be strengthened by citing examples of bacteria that are commensal.

It is well-known that E. coli, Clostridium perfringens, Lactobacillus, Proteus, Pseudomonas are classified as commensals (organisms of normal flora) and their relationship with the animal host (man) is a symbiotic one and is advantageous both to bacteria and the host as these bacteria--

- (1) serve as scavengers assisting in the disposal of waste material,
- (2) in intestine play a part in the nutrition of the host,
- (3) synthesise the major B group of vitamins, vitamin E and K. These syntheses make a significant contribution to the vitamin requirement of the host,
- (4) tend to exclude pathogenic (disease producing) bacteria and in this way serve to protect the host against diseases. Like Lactobacillus in adult vagina by acid production protects the vagina from infection of gonococcus and other pyogenic organisms. Many strains of E. coli produce colonies

which protect the intestinal tract from other pyogenic organisms of enterobacteriaceae family which are sensitive to them.

Thus these bacteria help in nutrition and protection of the host; but these very bacteria are said to cause diseases. Infection of the urinary tract being caused by *E. coli* and *Staph. faecales*, and *Proteus* causing operation wound infection and also urinary tract infection.

Seeing the above examples we can say *E. coli*, *Staph. faecales* and *Proteus* are present in each and every individual and *Staph. aureus*, *Viridans streptococci* in a majority of individuals yet every individual is not suffering from renal trouble and a majority of individuals are free from S.A.B.E., osteomyelitis, pneumonia and carbuncle.

As we know that a fertile soil is required for a seed to grow, likewise is the relationship of the human body with these micro-organisms which can flourish in the body only when suitable conditions for them prevail. This holds good for bacteria, protozoa, fungus, Arthropoda, helminth and also for viruses over the origin of which there is still a controversy and in some cases the host itself is being held responsible for its origin especially in the cases of tumour. "A possible diarch for animal viruses is supported by recent studies which have shown a high degree of homology between host and virus nucleic acids in certain cases especially the tumour virus. In such cases it is possible that the virus may have arisen from host cell nucleic acids" (Stewart & Beswick: *Bacteriology, Virology and Immunity*, 10th ed.).

Thus we see that the cause of the disease is this something or the de-ranged vital force, i.e. the cause lies within the body itself.

#### CURE

The importance of radical cure has already been stressed before and this radical cure can only be achieved when the cause of the disease has been removed.

Now the system of treatment that considers these micro-organisms as the cause of the disease try to bring about cure by killing and removing these causative organisms from the body but this system suffers from a number of set-backs.

(1) *Iatrogenic diseases* or drug induced diseases, commonly known as the side-effects of the drugs. Here the cure is brought about by killing and removing these causative organisms by drugs that are capable of doing so. Hence, the drugs should be such that are capable of doing so without producing any toxic (adverse) effect on the host (patient) in the ideal terms; but one is disappointed to learn that there is no such (ideal) drug. This can easily be understood for if a substance is capable of killing one organism it will certainly have toxic effect on the living cell.

C. W. H. Havard in his *Lectures in Medicine* writes, "It is not surprising that the introduction of so many potent and toxic chemicals into clinical

use has been accompanied by an alarming increase in drug induced diseases."

This is commonly seen in everyday life. Drug induced jaundice is a common feature, pain reliever aspirin can give rise to gastro-intestinal haemorrhage. Hexamethonium and macamylamine although reduces the blood pressure, produce constipation and impotence. Peptic ulceration may result from phenylbutazone which may also result in thyroid hypofunction; streptomycin can give rise to dizziness, tinnitus (noise in the ears) and later to deafness; tetracycline can cause a number of side-effects like sore in throat and mouth, difficult swallowing and especially, when given during pregnancy affects the bones and teeth of foetus and the infant causing dental enamel hypoplasia with pitting, cusp malformation, yellow or brown pigmentation on teeth and susceptible to caries. And if we talk of corticosteroid's side-effect then we can write down almost a disease from every system as it decreases the natural body resistance to disease; apart from this it can cause peptic ulceration, haemorrhage and perforation of stomach and bowels, osteoporosis (bone disorder), mental disorder, diabetes etc., and likewise can be listed many other drugs (as no drug is ideal).

(2) *Recurrence*: Although the micro-organisms have been killed, the condition within the body which allows these micro-organisms to grow still remains and hence the disease recurs as is especially seen in the chronic diseases.

(3) *Superinfection*: When any antimicrobial drug is used there is a suppression of part of the normal bacterial flora (commensals, stated before) of the patient which varies according to the drug used, and sometimes the drug resistant organisms freed from competition proliferates and causes disease. This superinfection has been found to be commoner than supposed. Superinfection also appears with drugs that interfere with the response of the body, adrenal steroids and antimitotic drugs.

(4) *Development of resistance to drugs*: This means that the bacteria, which can be killed by a drug, after sometime is capable of developing a resistance against that drug and then remain unaffected by it (by mutation or adaptation).

(5) Lastly, there are certain diseases from which no causative organism has been isolated so far and hence are given only symptomatic treatment and thus remain incurable, e.g. asthma, peptic ulcer, functional disturbances and metabolic disorders.

Thus we see the risk one faces when the treatment is directed towards the removal of the micro-organisms. But on the contrary if the system of treatment is host oriented (directed towards the patient), i.e. the normal biological equilibrium can be restored by stimulating the natural defence mechanism of the host, it is definitely the best method of treatment.

According to Dr. Jacques Imberchts, a physician is one who is capable of restoring the disturbed internal equilibrium of the patient back to normal so that the patient further does not require the medicine or the physician.

Thus meaning that the cure should be permanent and free from side-effects.

This also finds its parallel in *Charaka Samhita*: "That method of treatment which annihilates an existing symptom syndrome but gives rise to another new set of symptoms is not the method for an ideal cure; whereas that method which removes a symptom complex without exciting any other in its stead, is the ideal one (Sutrashthanam, *Charaka Samhita*).

Thus if the treatment is host oriented there will be no side-effects as the medicine is for the host, no reinfection as it restores the biological equilibrium and makes the body potent enough for self defence as by this the natural defence mechanism is strengthened. No superinfection, or drug resistance as it does not aim to kill the bacteria but these microorganisms are inactivated and removed from the body by natural body mechanism; and the diseases termed psychosomatic, allergic, functional and metabolic disorders automatically end, once the biological equilibrium of the body is restored to normal. Once this deranged vital force comes back to normal plane there is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being or perfect health. It is well-known that the homoeopathic treatment treats the patient and not the disease and helps to stimulate the deranged vital force to achieve its normal plane by which the biological equilibrium of the body is restored and the natural defence mechanism of the body is regained and thus health is restored permanently with no side-effects.

**Editorial comment:** (1) The concept that Allopathy regards diseases as caused by micro-organisms is outdated. Open any standard book of medicine today and you find the emphasis given to the host factors as much as to those that belong to the environment.

(2) From where else has the writer picked up the concepts of immunological and psychosomatic disorders, about which he mentions in his write-up, other than from a book of medicine?

(3) It is unfortunate, that we homoeopaths, while criticising allopaths for laying too much emphasis on micro-organisms forget that we totally ignore them while arguing that the diseases are solely caused by a deranged vital force. Both are expressions of imbalanced perspectives. We all agree that neither the soil by itself nor the seed alone can bear fruit. Both are needed for the purpose.

(4) Conflicts arise in mind due to loss of this delicate balance which if restored, the physicians belonging to all systems can function harmoniously for their common goal of establishing a happy and healthy society.