

INSECT BITES—AN EXPERIMENT WITH NATRUM MUR. AND FORMIC ACID

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Natrum mur. is an acknowledged cure for insect bites.¹ I have used it often with instant success for scorpion, wasp and ant bites. The form of usage was either as local application of a solution of common salt or together with potentized internal medication depending on the intensity and spread of pain. The potency used was 6X or 200X, depending on the time elapsed after the bite. In my experience the pain is reduced and gotten rid of quickly if the time elapsed is not much, say within fifteen minutes for scorpion bites. Itching and inflammation after ant and wasp bites are also absent if the medication is done without much time elapse. Without medication the bites result in pain, swelling and numbness for a couple of days. Hence I use common salt as a first step for any known or unknown insect bite. The cure effected is much faster than Avil taken internally and Lactocalamine applied externally—a common prescription in Allopathy for similar problems.

Formic acid, with molecular formula HCOOH , is a constituent² of the stings of ants, caterpillars, nettles and some wasps. The acid is tonic and in a concentrated form causes painful skin wounds. Its contact with the skin produces a pain very similar to an ant or scorpion bite—burning stinging kind of pain. I have carried out an experiment for checking the efficiency of Natrum mur. locally by simulating the insect bite with formic acid. On the back of my hand I made punctures, shallow and slightly deeper, with a sharp pin dipped in concentrated formic acid. With just superficial contact the skin blackens. On increasing the time of contact, the depth of puncture and quantity of acid, there is increase in pain and redness around the puncture accompanied by inflammation. The stinging and burning sensation is similar to an ant's bite. On applying salt solution over the reddened skin the time taken for getting relief depends on the depth of puncture and amount of acid permeated in. On the average, for a shallow puncture relief comes within a minute and for deeper punctures accompanied by inflammation and redness, it takes about five to ten minutes. For complete removal of redness it takes about half an hour. This is also the order of time for complete relief after a scorpion bite. When a puncture was made on a spot previously smeared with salt solution no pain or colouration was observed indicating the possible prophylactic action of salt solution against insect bites. For ant and mosquito bites I have observed this to be true experimentally.

In one case a lady bitten on the toe by a scorpion came after much time elapse. In vain she had tried *tulasi* juice, *choonam* (lime) etc. When she came she was frightened by the intensity of pain which was 'up to the chest'. After local application of common salt and internal administration of 200X

within minutes she started describing the descent of pain from chest to thigh to ankle and then just the toe. The descent is typical of a Hahnemannian cure and also covers the dictum that a local external application can also be cured externally. It is obvious that Natrum mur. with a proving similar to the effect of bite is an effective cure. From the experiment it also follows that the effect of bite can be simulated locally by the action of formic acid, a content of the sting of ants and perhaps scorpion. One would also like to know whether Formica, a tincture from crushed live ants containing formic acid would be effective in such cases. The provings² as given in Clarke's *Dictionary* have burning pain, swelling ameliorated by rubbing as some of the symptoms. Hering³ also mentions itching. These are partly similar to the bite symptoms and it requires to be tested as a cure for insect bite since isopathy has worked efficiently in many cases. Apis, a product from bee's sting, is considered to be similar to formica and is also used for ant bites when there is swelling.

REFERENCES

1. Boericke and Dewey: *Twelve Tissue Remedies of Schuessler.*
 2. Clarke, J. H.: *Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica.*
 3. Hering, C.: *Guiding Symptoms.*
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