

HOMOEOPATHY IN SPORTS MEDICINE

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INTRODUCTION

Clarke's *A Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica* describes Arsenic thus: "Arsenic is the remedy for the effects of prolonged endurance. It has the power of strengthening the muscles of the limbs and that of the breathing apparatus." This is exactly what we need in the game of boxing. Sustaining through prolonged sessions of endurance, tough and muscular limbs and an efficient breathing apparatus are the vital requirements of a boxer. I, therefore, started administering Arsenic 6 to my company boxing team in the Indian Military Academy way back in the year 1959-60, while training for the inter-company and inter-battalion boxing tournaments. The results were remarkable. My company and the battalion won the championships. Finally, the same stunt was tried in the Gorkha Brigade boxing tourney where the cadets of the Indian Military Academy also used to participate. We won again. Notwithstanding the fact that a majority of the Gorkha boxers were better skilled as compared to our cadets, it seemed that ultimately it was endurance that prevailed. The miracle could now squarely be attributed to my arsenic therapy. In the army there is a saying, once happenstance, twice coincidence, but third time it is definitely enemy action.

From then on I have been applying Homoeopathy to various disciplines of sports with awesome effectiveness. The Army Service Corps has produced the top-ranking team of basketball in the country. The Services are the monopolists of the game at the national level. Both these teams have been nurtured on purely homoeopathic sports medicine. The astounding success of the system was recognized by the Basketball Federation of India and Homoeopathy was invited officially to take care of the national team during the Ninth Asian Games. Undoubtedly, if applied on a large scale, Homoeopathy will do yeoman service to the otherwise languishing sports in this country.

THE HISTORY OF THE USE OF DRUGS TO IMPROVE MAN'S PHYSICAL PROWESS

It is a well documented fact in our own text books, namely, Clarke's *A Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica* that arsenic was fed to horses in the olden days in order to improve their endurance and speed. The porters of Tyrol maintained that it imparted them with a sense of invigoration and enabled them carry enormous load up steep mountains. *Charak Samhita*, the famous treatise on *Ayurveda* records an anecdote eulogizing the tonic effects of arsenic. Gallo-Roman history is replete with instances where a Druid (a community doctor) was commissioned to decoct secret potions that gave superhuman strength to their men-in-arms. Matadors of Madrid and Gladiators of Rome, all used queer potions in order to excel in their picadillos.

It is a basic instinct in man to try to outbeat his rival in competitive feats, be it recreational or war-like.

Coming to the abuse of drugs in international sports today, it suffices to say that it was being practised beyond any ethics and norms fully abetted by doctors, officials and the competitors alike till the International Olympic Committee made the dope testing mandatory. Even after that the sportsmen and their sponsors have been trying to short-circuit the dope testing or trying to find ways and means to avoid detection. To give you an example, Tomy Simpson, Britain's ace cyclist died after completing 2700kms of a gruelling 4785kms race called *Tour de France*. When autopsy on his body was done, traces of methyle amphetamine were found in his system. Amphetamine gives a psychological pep-up and an illusion of prowess. It was established that while the dose of the drug was insufficient to kill him, it was sufficient enough to prevent him knowing that he had reached the fatal limits of his endurance. A survey conducted by *The New York Times* in the year 1972 revealed that more athletes took drugs than was realised. A growing number of women in top level international competitions were taking anabolic steroids (a synthetic substitute for male hormone testosterone). It gave them manly qualities and they could thus easily beat other female competitors. Use of anabolic steroids was thus banned in the year 1974. This was how the sex determination technique was brought in.

Those engaged in the vocation of sports went a step further and devised the technique of blood-doping. In this process some blood of a competitor is drawn and super-oxygenated. The same is transfused back in to him minutes before he goes in to the arena. Oxygen in any quantity is neither a drug nor can it be detected to establish a hyper-oxygenated condition, notwithstanding the fact that it tremendously increases the energy output for a short period. It proved a boon in anaerobic events like sprints.

All these methods are inhuman, devilish and devoid of morality and ethics. More so, when medicine-men are abetting in it wholeheartedly. With repeated use many drugs cause physical dependence. It makes an abuser persist with the drug till it leads to moral and physical ruin. Possible masculinization of females is the side-effect of anabolic steroids. In case of blood doping, the RBCs of doped blood themselves get oxidized with frequent doping. Such sportsmen have chances of developing induced haemolytic anaemia. The prognosis could well be imagined.

As mentioned earlier, it is instinctive in man to do better. In this age of photo-finish competitions a last joule of energy becomes the deciding factor. External aids, therefore, seem quite inevitable to fall back upon. What is the answer then? The application of Homoeopathy, by all reckoning.

CELL, THE BASIC UNIT OF LIFE AND ITS HOMOEOPATHIC SIGNIFICANCE

Initial life formed in the tide water areas of the oceans—what has been called the "primeval soup". There formed the organic molecules after millions of years of evolution and made our basic unit of life called the cell. All the

cells, be it an amoeba or a human ovum, have these primeval oceans encased in them in micronic form. Sixty billions of these cells, each a distinct, independent unit, yet working in perfect unison, make the human body. The smallest are so small that a million of them can be arranged on a pin head. It is this basic unit of life that individually and collectively takes part in every action of ours—be it playing a game, fighting a foe or merely thinking. The efficiency of our such actions depends ultimately on the health and well-being of the cells. To nurture such micronic units the food or fuel, or the excitor agent for them should be much, much more micronic in size of its particulate so that not only it can be ingested by the cells but also transported by diffusion through the capillaries thinner than hair. Homoeopathy does exactly this and a little more. We break the element or the compound to its smallest molecules by progressive dilution. In addition, the molecules get ionized with a higher electrical potential. The diseased or fatigued cell on administration of a homoeopathic remedy not only gets easily ingestible food, fuel or excitor but also gets a boost to its bio-electric potential.

APPLICATION OF HOMOEOPATHY IN SPORTS MEDICINE

To be successful in any kind of sport two fundamental requisites must be fulfilled. The participant must possess enough endurance commensurate to the demands of the particular sport and a high degree of skill. Endurance mainly depends on the cross-section of the participating muscle groups, the state of nutrition and the energy output of the participating muscle groups. While the mass of the muscles takes shape automatically in the formative years of training, the nutrition depends on the socio-economic environments. The masses in our country firstly, have no knowledge of nutritional science; secondly, there is no approach from the government in this direction; and thirdly, the economic conditions of the masses forbid them to have good, wholesome food. By and large the diet is quantitative rather than qualitative. Since a major portion of our sportsmen come from lower and middle class families, their general state of nutrition is not what their counterparts in other countries have. Any nutrition from such diet is purely incidental rather than guaranteed.

In its ultimate analysis nutrition means the supply of organic and inorganic elements and compounds required by the cells for rejuvenation and replication. The requirement of these elements and compounds differs from one cell group to another depending upon their functions. They are generally: (a) Amino acids, (b) Fats and sugars, (c) Phosphates, (d) Carbon, (e) Hydrogen, (f) Oxygen, (g) Nitrogen, (h) Sodium, (i) Potassium, (j) Chlorine, and trace elements like, (k) Fluorine, (l) Silicon, (m) Vanadium, (n) Chromium, (o) Manganese, (p) Iron, (q) Cobalt, (r) Nickel, (s) Copper, (t) Zinc, (u) Arsenic, (v) Selenium, (w) Molybdenum, (x) Iodine.

Out of these elements and compounds only a few are required in quantities that could be expressed in grams per kg of body weight and they are non-toxic. Moreover, an excess of these can be metabolized in a storable

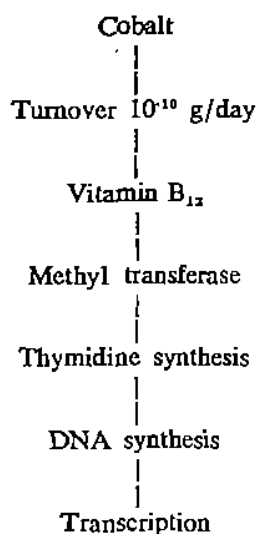
form and reserves created inside the body. For example, fats and carbohydrates. However, a majority of them, especially the elements are required in microgrammes per kg of body weight. For instance, the cobalt turnover in human system is 10^{-10} g per day. How can one manage such an infinitesimal particle of cobalt to go into the system but for the potentization method of Homoeopathy? If you have a look at the above list again, you will find that all the items other than proteins and fats and the gases are listed in the vastness of our materia medica. Given in right quantities, they fulfil the demands of the cells under stress and the sportsman feels dynamic. This way, all we have done is restored the harmony in the natural arrangement of a complex cellular chemistry. Allopathy has adopted all these elements in almost homoeopathic doses during the last two decades naming them micronutrients or trace elements. I have been administering the tissue salts and the trace elements to all the players as a matter of routine. The players kept on these remedies with an average age group of 35 years have shown remarkably better endurance and reflexes than players without it in the age group of 20.

Second contributory factor towards endurance is the energy availability of the participating muscle groups. Energy is produced by the power plants in the cells called mitochondria. The process is known as ATP synthesis. The mitochondria combine oxygen delivered by the haemoglobin with complex sugars held in the cytoplasm. The oxidation results into an ash called adenosine triphosphate, or ATP in short. ATP on further breakdown to adenosine diphosphate or ADP, releases the energy to meet the requirement of the cell. We hold all the possible phosphates in our armamentarium as tissue salts in a readymade state— the 6X or 12X potency.

In order to accelerate the oxidation rate we must also ensure an increased delivery of oxygen. This can be achieved by improving the Hb count by administering two homoeopathic remedies in 6 trituration namely, Vanadium and Ferrum met. Such simple homoeopathic management rewards us with supercharged sportsmen endowed with tremendous reserves of energy instantly available. Moreover, it is not cruel or inhuman like the process of blood doping in order to achieve the same end. Another added advantage is that the process cannot be classified as drugging or doping with chances of disqualification. In a nutshell, this is how applied Homoeopathy can play a vital role in improving the nutrition and thereby the energy output of a sportsman, thus making a sportsman superior to his rivals.

Once we have achieved sufficient energy, the next requirement is that of skill. Skill mainly depends on the state of reflexes which in turn depend on the overall health of the nervous system. The health of neurons or the nerve cell units especially, the capacity of variable electro-chemical potential and complex neuro-transmitters, so important for efficient transmission of impulses, further depends upon the interaction of a B group of vitamin. It has been well established that cobalt is the key element in bringing about

the required interaction in the nerve cells. The mechanics of the interaction is as follows:



It would thus be seen that cobalt in most micronic doses plays an important, in fact the key role, in the ultimate and functional health of the nervous system. In substance, if the nerves are healthy, the reflexes would be sharp; and if the reflexes are sharp, the skill is bound to be in peak form. Once energy has been imparted and skill incorporated, the sportsman is more than made. It sounds simple, appears simple and in fact, is just simple.

In this article an effort has been made to convey that the science of Homoeopathy if applied in sports would greatly meet the need of the day. Our dismal performance in the Los Angeles Olympics is the latest exhibition of class poverty of efforts and official apathy in the field. There is a passive message too, which has to be read in between the lines. That is, firstly, we as homoeopaths must not be content by merely being physicians of an orthodox class but also strive to penetrate other areas where our science can be effectively applied. It builds the image of our discipline and imparts a fillip to its expanding popularity. Secondly, we must cut down the so-called empiricism and find scientific basis for our principles. In today's world nothing is acceptable on its mere face value especially, scientific and technological subjects. We must analyse our treatments anatonically, physiologically, biochemically and pathologically in order to convince not only ourselves but also the inquisitive mind from the other systems of medicine.

Homocopathy is not traditional medicine as it has been branded today by all and sundry including the State. Unless we make a community effort to eradicate this misconception, we shall continue to occupy the rear ranks and the back benches.