

BACKACHE

DR. J. C. PAHWA, New Delhi

BACKACHE, pain in the back, is a symptom, not a disease. Though this is one of the commonest complaints we as doctors have to deal with, accurate diagnosis is rather difficult if not impossible.

Some authorities are of the opinion that at least half of the cases are wholly or partly psychological in origin. Such backaches are described as functional, psychosomatic or psychogenic and are caused by deep seated mental stresses or hidden emotional conflicts projected on the back.

Regarding its causative factors four, rather five groups of disorders are differentiated.

The first group—ligamentous and muscular injuries of the spine includes (a) Chronic arthritis of the lumbar spine or of the sacroiliac joints, (b) fractures, (c) ruptured intervertebral disks and (d) tuberculosis or (e) malignant lesions of the spine.

The second group, the visceral lesions that can cause pain, include (1) gastrointestinal conditions such as, (a) overloaded colon causing irritation to the lumbar nerves, (b) a spastic colon, (c) disorders of the appendix and rectum, (d) intra abdominal adhesions and hernias, (2) urological conditions such as infections and tumours of the prostate. (3) Gynaecological conditions, for example, retroversion and retroflexion of the uterus. (4) Central nervous system lesions such as (i) Tabes, (ii) meningitis, (iii) syringomyelia, (iv) lateral sclerosis, (v) tumours of the spinal cord and (vi) tumours of cauda equina, (5) general infectious diseases causing low backache; e.g. typhoid, influenza and septicaemia, (6) sciatic neuritis and (7) infection and tumours of retroperitoneal structures.

The third group or acquired lesions of the skeleton include the following disorders—(i) low grade infections and inflammatory lesions, such as rheumatoid spondylitis give morning pain while osteomyelitis gives constant pain. (ii) Neoplasms give constant back pain and may be either primary or metastatic. Involvement

of vertebral body or bodies and intactness of the intervertebral disks is pathognomonic of malignant disease. (iii) Traumatic spondylitis as well as fractures of facets and pedicles, gives static backache. (iv) Pathological conditions of the disk include those of the nucleus prolapsus and annulus fibrosus such as retropulsion or antipulsion, Lateral, shift, calcification, infiltration by other tissues, such as fibrous tissue, bone or blood vessels and dehydration. The further group of disorders that may cause low back pain consists of various congenital lesions. These include (a) elongation of the transverse recess of L5 which causes pain by impinging on the ilium causing friction sacralization of the last lumbar vertebra or lumbarization of the first sacral segment; and defect of the neural arch, unstable lumbosacral angle and variations of the articular facets.

Fifth group constitutes psychological factors.

Treatment : A thorough history of the patient's complaint, a general physical examination, and roentgenologic examination are the three important steps in the study of patients with low back pain.

Before administering your treatment remember well Hahnemannian golden rule that which can cause can cure and in order to cure seek out that which can cure.

Nux Vom.—Remedy of importance in cases of backache especially referable to spinal affections. Burning sensation in spine worse 3 to 4 a.m. Backache in lumbar region characteristic is that patient must sit up to turn over. Cervico-brachial neuralgia, bruised pain below scapulae. Sitting painful. The backache brought on by sexual excesses should lead to the consideration of *Nux* and *Staphisagria*.

Rhus Tox.—A violent pain in the neck as if broken is the greatest characteristic of *Rhus* in backache. It is one of the most suitable remedies in chronic forms of lumbago, while *Aconite* suits the acute forms. *Rhus* patient gets pain between shoulders on swallowing. This remedy seems to be especially recommended to affections of the deeper muscles of the back. There are great pains dull, bruised and aching—better from motion or lying on something hard and more while sitting.

Nat. mur.—has also this same symptom—backache relieved

by lying on something hard. But the Rhus pains are relieved by bending forward (?—Ed). While in Nat. mur. every movement accelerates the circulation.

Calcarea fluorica—also follows Rhus well. It is a suitable remedy in cases of chronic lumbago which is aggravated on beginning to move and ameliorated on continued motion. Pain with burning sensations in lower part of back.

Sulphur—Sensation as if vertebrae glided over each other is a characteristic. Pain in the lumbar region with a sudden loss of power to move.

Sepia—A very frequently indicated remedy in the backaches which are due to uterine disease. Sepia patient gets sudden pain in the back, as if struck by a hammer, gets a relief by pressing back upon something hard. General weakness in the small of the back, worse while sitting.

Aesculus—is often a useful remedy in backache during pregnancy when it is especially worse from walking or stooping. Severe, continuous, dull aching in the lumbosacral region affecting the sacrum and hips.

Cimicifuga—has violent aching in the back in women, dependent on uterine complaints. Rheumatic pains in muscles of back. Pain in lumbar and sacral region radiating down thighs and through hips. According to Dr. Aurand *Cimicifuga* is the best suitable remedy for the relief of lumbago or, 'crick in the back'.

Hypericum is a friend of the women who are forced to lift and strain and go up and down stairs frequently.

Remedies like Cobalt, Zincum and Cannabis Indica have BACKACHE worse from sitting. Bryonia patients have lumbago of a quiet type which aggravates on moving. Anacardium, Conium or Rhus give the indication of lumbago worse when first beginning to move. Secale has a sudden catch or kink in the back. Ledum patients get stiffness in the back by sitting still from a long time. Gnaphalium should not be forgotten in cases of chronic backache which gets worse from continued motion and is better while resting on the back.

In addition to this list of remedies Puls; Kali carb; Ant. tart; Variol etc., etc., are also worth approach for backaches in the court of Materia Medica.

Suggestions : Following suggestions are of great value as an adjunct to the homœopathic treatment.

In acute stage especially in backache due to inflammatory conditions patient should be advised rest in bed or at least some degree of immobilisation to assist the nature in relieving the inflammation. Hot fomentation, radiant heat or infra red irradiation and when the acute stage is over short wave diathermy or constant current may be used to increase the circulation, relieve the congestion and relax muscular spasm.

Massage also gives great comfort to the patient by promoting relaxation, relieving congestion and by increasing the circulation.

Remedial exercises—As soon as possible remedial exercises should also be introduced in the treatment plan both to preserve the mobility—which can be limited by the adhesions, and also to increase and improve the circulation and nutrition of the muscles and then to increase the muscle power of the weakened back muscles.

In electrical treatment occasionally the counter irritation is applied to one special painful spot. Surged faradism or stimulation with the medicolator is sometimes given in chronic phase of fibrositis.

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President—Dr. Sm. Vasudha Malhotra (R.M.P.); Hony. Secy.—Dr. R. D. Saxena, (R.M.P.); Hony. Joint Secy.—Dr. Ugrasen Malhotra (R.M.P.); Hony. Treasurer—Dr. G. M. Garde, M. Sc., R.M.P.) and 4 other members of the Executive Committee.

The Association celebrated Hahnemann's Birthday on 10-4-65 with grandeur. The ceremony was attended by Homœopaths of the locality including those of Rullein and Unhel as also by high officials and dignitaries of the place.
