

MAGNESIUM PHOSPHORICUM AS AN ANODYNE

DR. ABHOY PADA CHATTERJEE, Calcutta

The anti-neuralgic properties of the drug, runs markedly over the general indications, with special reference to nerve and pain symptoms. These we will find to stand up in bold and striking relief from the rest. The leading mental symptom of the drug is sobbing and lamenting about the pain; also a strange physical restlessness exhibited in a tendency to carry articles about aimlessly from place to place. This symptom is said to occur under no other drug in our materia medica. The head symptoms embrace a variety of neuralgic pains in almost every nerve. Headaches are described as darting, stabbing, shifting, intermittent and spasmodic, always relieved by hot applications. Pains worse after mental labor. There are also similar pains from top of head down the spine, worse between the shoulders.

Under *eyes* we have orbital and supra-orbital neuralgias, worse on right-side and relieved by external applications of warmth—the site of pain (usually where the nerves leave their bony orifices in the skull) being excessively tender to touch. We have also lachrymation, photophobia with contracted pupils, ptosis and twitching eyelids. The *ears* show neuralgic pains, worse in cold air and by washing face and neck in cold water. Of the *face*, every branch of the fifth nerve is in pain. Pains on right side from infra-orbital foramen to the incisor teeth; they gradually radiate over the whole face, are worse by touch, cold and motion of the jaws. The teeth are very sensitive to cold and touch. Toothache is worse on going to bed, better by heat and hot fluids, severe pains in decayed and filled teeth.

One of the chief gastric symptoms is a nerve affection, i.e. hiccough. There is also gastralgia with clean tongue, relieved by warmth and bending double. In the abdomen there is severe colic, with flatulent distention, relieved by pressure, rubbing and warmth with dysenteric and cramp-like pains common to all the magnesium salts. There is retention of urine from spasm of neck and bladder.

Under female genitals we have ovarian neuralgia, worse on right side, menstrual colic in which pains precede the flow, with great relief from heat. Also vaginismus and membranous dysmenorrhoea.

In the respiratory sphere occurs spasmodic nerve cough, said to resemble whooping cough—the leading circulatory symptoms being nervous palpitation, with spasmodic pains suggestive of angina pectoris.

The back symptoms are chiefly neuralgic pains all down the spine which is very sensitive to touch; also intercostal neuralgias, especially sciatica—all pains being worse by cold, unusually worse after going to bed, and always better by warm application and firm pressure.

I believe we have no remedy in our whole materia medica which presents such a picture of neuralgia, and this is why magnesium phosphoricum may be expected to take the first place as an anodyne in the homœopathic practice. The indication for its use are especially clear and well marked and the pains produced in the different nerves affected have all the same characteristics. There is, perhaps, a partiality for the right side of the head and face, otherwise all sensory nerve-tracts seem equally influenced by the drug.

The leading indications are evidently relief from warmth and pressure, with aggravation from cold at night.

There is tenderness over the affected part, the pains causes mental distress and seems unbearable. There is plenty of evidence in the provings of Magnesium phosphoricum that it has a specific action on muscular tissue, especially in unstriated muscle, causing painful spasms of heart, uterus, intestines, bladder, and possibly of the voluntary muscles as well.

The opinions of one or two whose names are well known, may be of interest: Dr. T. F. Allen tells us that the drug has been found particularly valuable in neuralgias of the forehead, especially supra-orbital, Dr. Dewey recommends it in the types of neuralgia I have indicated, and also in colic, dysmenorrhœa, whooping cough, chorea and writer's cramp. He points out that the patient for whom it is indicated are always languid and exhausted. Dr. Kent compares magnesium phosphoricum to colocynth, which has the same kind of pains-tearing, cutting and terribly neuralgic. He verifies the indications given for magnesium phosphoricum, and thinks that, like colocynth, it especially affects the nerve sheaths. Dr. Shannon claims a specific action for it in diseases having their seat in the nerve fibres, cells, or in the terminal bulbs of the nerves in the muscles, and perhaps on muscular tissue as well. He confirms the visual indications and adds that neuralgia at night with freedom from pain all day is a special indication for its use; also that the pains are often accompanied by constrictive feelings. Dr. Guillon mentioned a case of left sided neuralgia affecting the lower jaw, also frontal, and involving the whole left side of the head to the nape of the neck, of an intractable type, which was rapidly cured by magnesium phosphoricum 6x trit. Dr. Wingfield, of Birmingham, recommends it in Toothache when non-inflammatory, also in left side neuralgia, with pain over temple.

The Carbonate is especially useful in the toothache of pregnancy, and according to Dr. Allen, it produces a general tendency to neuralgic pains, with aggravation at night. Also in facial neuralgia, worse by touch and cold draughts, with tendency to move about the inability to remain in bed. Magnesium muriaticum also has proved useful in neuralgias of the head and around the eyes, worse by motion and fresh air, better by pressure. We can well understand, therefore, why magnesium in combination with phosphorus—the essential nerve food—should have so specific an action in nerve tissue as the symptomatology I have outlined.