

# ERYTHROMYCIN INDUCED GASTRIC IRRITATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Gastro-intestinal disturbances are brought about by oral administration of the common antibiotics like Tetracyclines (Tetracycline hydrochloride, Chlortetracycline, Oxytetracycline hydrochloride, Doxycycline hyclate etc.), Penicillins (Ampicillin, Cloxacillin, Pencillin-V. etc.), Chloramphenicol, Erythromycin and Streptomycin. They are available in many dosage forms like tablets, capsules, suspensions etc. for oral administration.

Other antibacterial agents like Sulphonamides, Nitrofurantoin, PAS and Griseofulvin may also lead to similar reactions.

The symptoms may be vague and mild so as to pass unnoticed or they may be most distressing and alarming to the patient. The case in question here had most distressing symptoms.

## HISTORY

Erythromycin 250 mg tablets had been prescribed prophylactically for a female patient aged 35 years, preparing for a dental extraction. The dosage had been two tablets thrice daily. At the end of using 10 such tablets she developed symptoms of acute gastric irritation. She had also been administered with the usual local anesthetic Xylocaine, the analgesic Paracetamol and a famous brand product of glucose containing Dextrose monohydrate, Calcium phosphate, Calcium glycerophosphate and Vitamin D. Except Xylocaine, she was under the influence of the actions of all the other agents at the time of reporting for homoeopathic treatment.

## CASE

The patient appearing at about 2.00 a.m. in the night, complained of severe burning pain in the epigastrium extending towards the throat. For about 6-12 hours earlier she had been feeling mild pains and rumbling sensations in the abdomen. Burning pains better after eating. Stools normal. Nausea followed by vomiting 2-3 times. Vomitus almost watery with froth and streaked with blood.

Patient was in great anxiety, groaning with pain and moving about briskly. Wonders whether she is going to die. Must sit down because of weakness. Sweat especially in temples.

## PRESCRIPTION

The time of aggravation, burning pain and the anxiety lead to the choice of Arsenicum album. Four globules of Arsenicum album 6 dissolved in two

teaspoonfuls of previously boiled water, out of which two teaspoons were administered five minutes apart. All other medicines were prohibited.

#### PROGNOSIS

Improvement set in within 10 minutes. Both nausea and burning pain disappeared completely. The patient fell into a sound sleep within 45 minutes.

Following day there was a relapse. Burning pain and nausea reappeared nearly with the same intensity soon after she drank bed tea at about 8.00 a.m. However there was no vomiting. A striking difference was that she appeared more depressed than anxious this time. This ruled out repetition of Arsenicum album. On referring to Nash's *Leaders in Homoeopathic Therapeutics* indications under Iris versicolor seemed to fit into the case.

Administered four globules of Iris versicolor 6 dissolved in one tablespoonful of previously boiled water. Improvement set in once again within 10 minutes. She could eat a half boiled egg and a little rice for lunch and went on for a complete recovery with just one dose of Iris versicolor.

#### DISCUSSION

The most important observation is that while the irritating agent is still active in the patient the potentised drugs were able to bring about speedy relief. A single dose of Erythromycin 250 mg provides effective blood concentrations for 6 hours or longer. The case in question had been taking twice the usual dose (i.e. 2 x 250 mg) of Erythromycin about 5½ hours prior to the curative action of Arsenicum album. Such an action may be possible perhaps because the irritating agent (Erythromycin) was present in the blood in comparatively small amount and the gastric irritation is dose independent for the most part.

Experience in few occasions with Iris versicolor indicates that it has a definite action against burning pain in stomach and small intestine.

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