

EDITORIAL FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2006 AND JANUARY 2007

SOME CHRONIC USES OF ALOE SOCOTRINA

Aloe comes from Liliaceae family and it is a red fiery gum which is being triturated. It is known as 'Socotra' because the plant Aloe is grown near the shores of Indian Ocean and the Island of Socotra. The ancient use of this remedy was to purge off the bile as mentioned by Dunham. Aloe was proved by Dr. Helbic of Germany in 1833 but additional symptoms were added by Dr. Hering. The purpose of writing this editorial is that I want to share my experiences using Aloe in chronic cases and with advanced pathology.

Let me begin with a case of chronic hypertension with severe headache.

Mr. A.G., aged 48 years, had hypertension since 8 years along with congestive headache. He was taking Tab. Envas - 1 tablet 5 mg, 3 times a day, but unfortunately his blood pressure never came under control and his bursting headache really never improved with the allopathic medicines.

I took his case and I found out that his headache was not actually characterized by shooting or sharp cutting pains that we commonly see in hypertensive patients, but it was more a feeling of congestion, i.e. as if all the blood in the body is rushing to the head or as if something comes into the head and gives a feeling to the person that something is pulsating, and this will be worse by lying down. He also said that these pulsations came from very deep part of the head or brain. Whenever he went to pass stools, especially when he strained, his pulsations would become worse, he needed to apply lots of cold water to the head to bring him some relief to the headache. Being constipated always aggravated his problems **(constipation increased all his problems including mental as well as physical symptoms - this is the key note of Aloe)**. When I saw his eyes, they were discolored red. He also said that along with the redness of the eyes he also felt heat coming out from his eyes.

His face was dark, he had dryness in the mouth and he always wanted his breakfast, lunch and dinner only if he had a clear bowel movement. He did not have any appetite if he had not passed the bowel on that particular day.

He always drank lots of water with and after meals especially after dinner. He frequently had problems with bowels with collection of lot of flatulence.

He was working as a manager in the Bank of Punjab. He was very hardworking and honest person. His nature was extremely irritable and if things did not go his way he would surely get angry.

His wife mentioned that there were phases where he worked quite a lot for days together and then there would be a period where he would not work for many days, this phase would alternate quite frequently in his life - where he would work and then after some days he would slow down in his work purely from the state of being lazy or lethargic. He used to work from 10:00 a.m. in the morning till 10:00 p.m. in the night. His only way of relaxation was long walks. Otherwise he was a contended individual.

The whole episode started after an incidence occurred in his life where he gave a memo against one of his juniors for which he had to face many problems with the union people, this made him very angry, he could not accept wrong support by the members of the union towards his junior. Within 15 to 20 days of this episode, he complained of the headache, and went to a general practitioner who then diagnosed him to be a case of hypertension.

Whenever he was angry, his face and lips would become red and the face would develop a lot of heat. His tongue was discolored yellow with the dryness in the mouth. His appetite was totally dependent on his bowel movement. Only when he had a clear bowel movement, would he have an appetite to eat. He frequently had thirst while eating (***Ammonium carb; Lach; Natrum carb***). He frequently suffered from gaseous distension with sensation of fullness.

He loved cold water and milk; he required a lot of tea to stimulate himself to work for long hours in the bank. He slept on his back; at times the thought of work disturbed his sleep. Occasionally he would see nightmares.

With the above picture I gave him Nux Vomica - 1M to begin with, I continued Nux Vomica for 2 - 3 months but the results were not very encouraging.

I restudied the case and I found out that few things which were very important to the case were not covered by Nux Vomica and that is - everything started after anger; there was a phase of activity, hard work alternating with lassitude, prostration and indifference; his discoloration of the face and the heat of the face when he was angry, when he was excited; his bowel concomitant of not feeling much hungry when he was constipated and a strong concomitant of being thirsty while eating food.

I now selected Aloe Soc - 30; I gave him 1 pill twice a day and asked him to gradually reduce his Tab. Envas, which he did over a period of next three months. Slowly I could confirm that most of his chronic problems began to disappear, starting with headache and then hypertension. His headache which was so chronic and so obstinate was completely absent within a period of four weeks of starting aloe, He became mentally more active, there were hardly any phases of lethargy or inactivity which initially alternated with the industrious nature, his sleep pattern improved and he could live his life peacefully. Such are the deeper indications of Aloe Socotrina.

There is another case of Aloe Socotrina which I would like to share with you. This is a case which I got from a very remote village in Madhya Pradesh. This lady had a massive distension of abdomen with vomiting and gaseous distention this was followed by severe pain. This continued for many months but she ignored it and when she found her pain intolerable she went to see a village doctor who tried to help her but in vain, finally the lady came to Bombay Hospital, got herself admitted and investigated, where it was found that she had multiple strictures and fibrosis in the mesentery producing acute to sub-acute intestinal obstruction. The strictures were so extensive that it was impossible to operate on her and the doctor said that the best way is to treat her conservatively with pain killers and tranquilizers. The relatives were not satisfied by this prognosis from the surgeon. And she then came to my clinic for consultation.

Now, when she came to me, she had a unique symptom in the abdomen. That the pain, distension and discomfort were more in the area of flanks, and loins. She would be in great despair with anger and irritability. She was extremely dejected since she could not be helped by any doctors in Bombay. There were excessive tympanitis, and she would only feel better by passing flatus. Sometimes she felt that there was a stone in the abdomen. (***When somebody talks about stone in the abdomen, then***

Calcarea carb is the important remedy). There was also a sense of heaviness and lump in the abdomen that did not permit her to eat properly, the appetite was diminished with severe constipation. There was a general sense of constant uneasiness and restlessness.

Socially she came from a very poor family, her husband did not earn enough, she had three children, and all her life she had worked very hard for the family, there was a time when she was very stressed due to severe water shortage in the village and there was hardly any water for domestic use.

She always felt that she never really enjoyed life to the fullest, it was the same old routine from morning to night, i.e. to get up early in the morning, to clean the utensils, to go to the kitchen, to prepare the food, to wash clothes, etc. and due to all this she had no time to rest and she had no time for herself. She was very discontented with her life. She was sensitive to noise, and hated noises of the drums and loud music. This type of behavior repulsed everybody since she was always in a very morose mood, gloomy, fretful and ill-humored mood.

She used to have a severe rage and anger due to her illness. She used to perspire on the head during sleep. Her face had a very sickly expression and tongue was coated white. Her appetite was diminished; sometimes she will have loud eructation with taste of food eaten.

Her menses were dark and clotted. She was a hot patient, she desired salt, sour food and spicy food aggravated a lot and she loved tea.

The pain was so severe that every few hours she needs analgesics and when I saw her first time she was taking 4-5 combiflam tablets a day. Sometimes she used to take injections of cyclopam; she was constantly on the course of antibiotics. Since purgatives were not advised in this case she used to take some Ayurvedic preparation for bowel movement.

I studied her case and I decided to give her Aloe 200, 1 pill to be diluted in a cup of water, and give one teaspoonful twice a day, and if she is in more pain she can take more frequently.

I asked them to stay in Bombay for at least 3-4 weeks so that I can adjust the dose of the remedy and see the effect of the remedy which was given

to her. Over a period of time I noticed that her irritability, despair, rage and discontentment was much better, feeling of rejection was much better, emotionally she became quite different individual with the same degree of pain. I also saw that the need of pain killers became gradually less and within one month I could bring down pain killers to only two combiflam tablets a day. In this period she never received any injection which she used to take every week.

In the next few months I continued Aloe, same potency but now only 4-5 times a week one dose. Her pain killers were completely stopped, the intensity of pain reduced to almost 80% to 90%.

After 6 months of the Homoeopathic treatment I lost the track of the patient, patient did not come for further follow-up, the patient was poor to afford that kind of money to come to Bombay and stay for few days, also I feel she was extremely frustrated due to her illness.

For whatever little time she was under my care, Aloe Socotrina really helped her to come out of the situation.

My study of Aloe has been enhanced after reading Aloe from Herring's Guiding Symptoms. Herring mentioned about the story of how the genuine Aloe was brought to America by U.S. Navy people from the sultan of Muscat.

Even though Aloe was proved by Helbic in 1833, lot of additions came from Herring and later on by Jahr. Some of the symptoms which I have repeatedly confirmed in my practice, where Aloe was the indicated remedy, are:

- Irritable, angry with pain; with colic they feel that life is like a burden.
- Do not want to do any mental work or labour, they just want to lie down and grumble about their pain.
- Dissatisfied and angry especially when they do not pass normal stool or especially on those days when the pain is extremely severe; sometimes the pain makes them very frantic and they have no control on themselves.

- Strong sensitivity towards the noise which is a strong concomitant which I have seen.
- The congestive feeling in the head or congestive headache is one thing which I have noticed a lot in Aloe. Aloe usually does not have a sharp shooting type of pain but rather has got a very strong congestion (Apis, Ferrum, Glonoine, and Melilotus).

Apis usually develops congestion as a concomitant with a bowel complaint. Whenever there is a headache due to insufficient stool or due to constipation Aloe is the drug of choice.

- Another important symptom which I took from the Herring's Guiding Symptoms is the pain in the deep part of the orbit, even in the head the pain is in the deeper aspect of the brain.
- Tongue is coated yellow and there is strong appetite for salty food. They love fruits and juicy things; they love tea; they love stimulants but they have a strong aversion to beer and meat.
- Herring says, in young children, they usually go to toilet or they hurry to the toilet immediately after eating or drinking. The discomfort in the abdominal region is always worse standing and it needs bending forward to give some relief.
- The flatus that a person passes is extremely offensive, burning flatus. Every time a person passes urine, the person has a fear that he may pass a thin stool along with it.
- Aloe has been a very useful remedy in people with enlarged prostate where there is incontinence of urine. Desire to pass urine is so urgent that he hardly can retain any urine. Offensive sweats on the genitals.

In the end I only conclude that no remedy is acute or chronic in Homoeopathy. Any remedy given in the Materia Medica can be acute or chronic; it mainly depends on what indication it has been prescribed upon.

Suppose you select only acute symptoms of the patient and compare that with the remedy in Materia Medica then the remedy given can be called

acute as the indications were very superficial. But if a remedy is selected on the constitution of the person covering the generals, mentals and particulars then the remedy selected will be a chronic remedy.