

Editorial for the month of January 2008

My experiences with rare remedies in the field of Arthritis and Rheumatism

Angustura Vera

This remedy from Rutaceae family was first introduced by Hahnemann in his *Materia Medica Pura* way back in the year 1817. I had an opportunity to use this remedy in the late 70's when I started practicing Homoeopathy, since then I have seen many cases of Angustura where I was able to confirm its characteristic indication in the above field.

The symptoms which I have confirmed repeatedly in this remedy is the stiffness of the joints, accompanied by restlessness which resembles that of Rhus-tox. There is a marked weakness and stiffness of fibrous tissues, ligaments, muscles and joints. Sometimes the stiffness can be felt deep in the bone marrow of long bones. The stiffness can also be accompanied by paralysis as the muscles remain constantly in the state of tension. Hence, when the person tries to walk he feels that the limb is almost paralyzed.

There is excessive crackling of the joint, it is one of the remedies where you see severe crackling like Nitric acid and Capsicum.

Sometimes you will see stiffness associated with cramps also. Once I had a case of a very obese lady, who used to complain of excessive heaviness of the thigh the moment she walks and the heaviness becomes so severe that she almost falls down or she needs to sit on the chair immediately in the midst of walking. When I examined her knee joint I saw that there is excessive crackling in the knee. Prescribing a few doses of Angustura to her gave a long lasting relief.

I have also used Angustura in many cases where the person has to exert a lot in an unusual position like a tailor, cobbler, sculptor, artist, labourer who works on heavy machinery, or one who works on computer for long hours. This is true if one is using stretched arms or stretched legs constantly, and as a result they develop severe stiffness of the affected part, in such cases, this remedy shows wonderful results .

Sometimes I have also found jerking of the muscles and the muscle can go into excessive twitching. Most of the arthritic pains are worse in cold weather, damp weather and they are worse with motion. Many cases of cervical spondylosis I have treated with this remedy where the guiding symptom was slightest motion of the arm aggravates the

pain in the nape of the neck. In general the arthritic pain is better by cold application and continued motion like Rhus-tox.

Many authors have described that it is close to Nux-vom only because the person is oversensitive, irritable and excitable. Sometimes they can be ill-humored and discontented. What differentiates these two remedies is the cowardice. Angustura is more of a coward, he lacks the tenacity, obstinacy and over bearing self-confidence of Nux-vom. When you observe these patients, they may look quite happy, elated and excited from outside but this is a mask because from inside they have a weak character without real good power.

In the end I can only say that this weakness or fatigue of the thighs is one of the concomitant which I have repeatedly confirmed in my practice. There is strong desire for coffee and marked aversion to fatty and rich food.

Stellar media

Another remedy which I have used in my practice is Stellaria media, this remedy was introduced late in the 18th Century near 1896, and this is 'common chickweed'. I have seen that patients who need this remedy develop a very sharp and shooting pain, which is rheumatic in origin and the characteristic symptom is the soreness of the part to touch and the stiffness of the joint, aggravation from the warmth of bed and aggravation of the pain from slightest motion, and this is exactly opposite to Angustura which has studied.

The most common parts that are affected are - the head, the back and the neck and it is more on the right side, except the knee which is left side that is affected. Many times the patient who needs this remedy has got a strong aggravation in the morning; sometimes I have used this remedy in acute phase of chronic rheumatic arthritis. When you touch and examine the knee joint it will be hot to touch indicating a severe synovitis. Sometimes I have seen that there can also be arthritic nodosities in the fingers.