

Editorial for the month of September 2008

Homoeopathic Management of atypical angina

Angina is caused by insufficient blood supply to the heart muscle. This is typically caused by atherosclerotic narrowing of the coronary arteries, or much less frequently, by coronary artery spasm. Atypical angina refers to symptoms of chest pain that do not really sound to the doctor like they are caused by the heart. Atypical angina is much less frequently associated with coronary artery disease than is typical angina. If you have so-called atypical angina, this would not affect the results of a thallium stress test. In fact, a thallium stress test is often useful in patients with atypical angina to help figure out if their chest pains really are due to coronary artery disease.

In Unstable angina chest pain is unexpected and usually happens when you are at rest. If you have chest pain that is new, worsening or constant, you have a greater risk of having a heart attack, an irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia), and even sudden death. See your doctor as soon as possible.

Variant angina

Variant angina – also called Prinzmetal's angina – usually happens spontaneously, and unlike stable angina, it nearly always happens while you are at rest. It doesn't follow physical exertion or emotional stress. Attacks may be very painful and usually happen between midnight and 8 a.m. It is caused by coronary artery spasm. About two-thirds of people with variant angina have severe atherosclerosis in at least

one major coronary artery and the spasm usually happens very close to the blockage.

Microvascular angina

Microvascular angina causes chest pain but without any apparent blockage in a coronary artery. The pain is caused by an improper functioning of the tiny blood vessels that feed your heart. (This condition may also be referred to as Syndrome X, not to be confused with metabolic syndrome, which is also known as Syndrome X.)

I had a vast opportunity to treat atypical angina in my practice. I will present some cases to you which I treated successfully.

The first case was of a physician from Calcutta who in the afternoon developed a severe heavy sensation in the area of precordium along with piercing pain the throat pit, upper abdomen and around the left shoulder. He suffered this problem for about 30 minutes, and then he complained of weakness which made him lie down on the bed, then within few minutes he experienced coldness of the feet which was ascending gradually upwards.

The discomfort in the chest became more severe and he almost collapsed, after few minutes he had huge vomiting, and then he developed coldness of the whole body. A local physician was called who examined him and said that he suspected heart attack and he should be immediately shifted to hospital, the blood pressure recorded in the house was 90/70 mm of Hg., the cardiogram was however normal. They also took a sample of blood and sent it for analysis for measurement of cardiac enzymes but in the mean time his son who was a big follower of homoeopathy immediately

phoned me to Mumbai and said - my father has all this symptoms and can Homoeopathy help?

I studied all his symptoms and paid attention to this heavy feeling in the chest, his chilliness, coldness and collapse including the coldness in the feet that was ascending upwards, I asked his son to phone me back after 15 minutes so that I can check in materia medica the symptoms. He phoned me back and I asked son to immediately start for his father Aconitum (not aconite) 30, few pills in the glass of water to be dissolved and stirred and given one teaspoonful every few minutes. With in few doses the father felt much better, he recovered from his collapsed state, his blood pressure improved, and his heavy feeling disappeared. Next day his son took him to a very leading cardiologist who declared that he has no cardiac problem but it was a case of an atypical angina.

Aconitum is not a new remedy for me; I have studied this remedy from Allen's encyclopedia and Allen's handbook of material medica. It is an alkaloid which is prepared from the root of the plant Aconite Napellus. In my practice I use this remedy a lot in cases of Trigeminal neuralgia and also occasionally in Guillain Barre Syndrome. The most striking feature is the coldness, the collapse and the heavy feeling. Most of the symptoms come very acutely in a very strong intensity. The patient develops severe anguish with fear of death; small weak pulse is another very characteristic symptom. This remedy if it is correct usually shows improvement in the very first does itself.

Second case which I remember was of a Parsi gentleman who was 56 years old, he attended a wedding, had a good amount of rich food and around midnight he developed an acute distension of the abdomen with severe pain in the

chest. The pain was so severe that he could not breathe properly.

The wife got very much panicky and she phoned me at 1a.m. in the night that my husband has got breathing problem accompanied by chest pain, distension of abdomen, could you kindly give a house call. I immediately went and saw him. I could see on his face paleness, he was asking for sips of water, there was a huge distension of the stomach, he kept on telling his wife that if I could pass little flatus I would feel much better.

His breathing was little abdominal and he constantly complained of constriction feeling near his precordial region. He said he cannot breathe deeply as he feels that it will damage his heart and he will get a heart attack. He had quite a big phobia of heart attack even when he was normal because he used to indulge himself a lot in a rich food, fatty food and lot of non-vegetarian food.

Prior to this incidence he was also constipated. When I examined his blood pressure, it was 130/90 mm of Hg., the pulse was 95 per minute; I examined his heart and his heart sounds were quite normal, I advised his wife that if he becomes serious then they should shift him to the hospital for an urgent cardiogram and cardiac enzymes

Internally I was confident that whatever medicine I will be giving to him will surely help. Now here there was a definite history of indulgence in rich food in a wedding, gaseous distension which was pressing in diaphragm and producing a severe chest pain. Whenever you get above picture there is very interesting remedy in our homoeopathic materia medica known as Natrum nitricum. I gave Natrum nitricum 200, few pills to be dissolved in water and asked the wife to give him

one teaspoonful every few minutes. After 3-4 doses he passed a huge quantity of gas which relieved his cardiac anxiety and discomfort in the region of the heart. His face which was pale became much better.

I have used this remedy very successfully, not only in the cases of angina which are atypical or gastric origin but I have used this remedy very successfully in cases of epistaxis in young children, especially when they are constipated. Then I find those children are quite lazy and lethargic.

There is another interesting case of a young girl of 18 years who once complained of severe chest pain to her parents as she came from her school in the evening. The pain was so severe that she was practically trembling and she was literally in an agony, she was restless with the pain. Everybody in the family got nervous, a doctor was called who examined her and gave her some injection and she went to sleep for 2 hours but again after 2 hours a similar episode of pain started which made her quite nervous, anxious and she again complained of something is happening in the chest and she is going to die. These were the two words that she kept on muttering quite a lot. The parents became now little more nervous. A next door neighbor who was my patient advised them to start homoeopathy. Initially they were reluctant but later on they got convinced and they called me, when I examined the girl I saw lot of people were surrounding her bed where she was lying on the bed, she was taking a deep breaths, it was as if she was going to take the last breath, when I asked her what is wrong with you? She said severe chest pain and I am going to die.

When I was examining her she suddenly started trembling all through out the body which was quite unusual, I asked the parent is there any ailment of psychological trauma or some problem or is she having some tough time in her college? They said 'no, basically she is the last person to be nervous with the peer pressure or examination fear or for the stress or studies.

I said ok, I examined her pulse which showed tachycardia, examined her abdomen it was quite tympanatic and the extremities were little restless. She will bend the knees and straighten it up and then again after some time she will bend the knees. This unique symptom of taking deep breathe along with the type of anxiety that she is going to die with practically no trace of cardiac illness in a young girl of 18 years made me thought of a remedy Moschus. I gave her Moschus 30 in the glass of water, few doses and with in few hours she felt much better.

I remembered Moschus because I had earlier read the work of Dr. E. B. Nash, In my library there is a book titled "Expanded work of Nash", published by B. Jain Publishers, New Delhi. In it Nash who has given a nice case of hysterical spasm of the chest where the patient had a spasm of the chest and he kept on complaining 'I shall die, I shall die' and he was extremely excited and few doses of Moschus really helped the person.

Also there was another case of Nash where a lady of 72 years old, she had some difficulty in the heart and she felt obliged to take deep breathe. Dr. Nash cured her with few doses of Moschus. Dr.Lippe has repeatedly verified this symptom of talking deep breathe and nervousness with spasmodic constriction of the chest as a red line symptom of Moschus. Since then Moschus is one of my favorite

remedies to prescribe in this above condition, never once I have been disappointed when I use according to the proper indication.

Thank you.