

Editorial for the month of July 2011

Spider Group

Spiders form the largest and most widely distributed order of class of animals called Arachnida.

There are thousands of different species of spiders. The common classification is as follows:

1. ARANOMORPHAE or DIPNEUMONES, with one pair of lungs.
2. MYGALOMORPHAE or TETRAPNEUMONES, with two pairs of lungs.

ARANOMORPHAE

1. They spin cobwebs in the air.
 2. The poison glands and ducts are elongated and the claws move horizontally like drill pin.
- E.g. *Tarentula hispanica*

MYGALOMORPHAE

1. Always live in funnels and tubular holes in the ground. Many camouflage the hole with a twig or a leaf of the tree like a mouse trap mechanism.
 2. They have short glands and ducts and their fangs move vertically.
- E.g. *Mygale*, *Tarentula cubensis*

The most common remedies I use in my practice are:

1. *Aranea diadema*
2. *Aranea ixobola*
3. *Aranea scinencia*

4. Tela araneae (cobweb)
5. Latrodectus hasselti
6. Latrodectus katipo
7. Latrodectus mactans
8. Mygale lasiodora
9. Tarentula cubensis
10. Tarentula hispanica
11. Theridion curassavicum.

I would like to discuss Latrodectus to begin with; there are 3 remedies Latrodectus hasselti, Latrodectus katipo and Latrodectus mactans which I use in my practice. The best article to read about Latrodectus is an article published in July 1889 in Homoeopathic Recorder and reproduced by Dr. Anschutz in 'New old and forgotten remedies'. The article is written by Dr. Johns and it shows the typical effect of the spider bite which resembles the proving of Latrodectus very beautifully.

When I was a student I was introduced to this remedy for the very first time by Late Dr. Prakash Vakil and later on he stimulated me to read the old articles on spider remedies from Homoeopathic Recorder and various other old journals.

I practically read almost all the articles related to the Latrodectus and the most important thing that I have learned from them is how to apply the symptoms clinically in practice especially the mental symptoms.

Whenever Latrodectus is indicated there is never calmness there is always 'irritability' there is always 'restlessness', there is always 'anger' and in extreme cases you can also have 'delirium'.

Another most important area that I have seen is the 'inflammation'. Whenever you see a case of Latrodectus, inflammation has to be there in any part of the body especially in the lymphatic vessels and that makes the Latrodectus go very useful in patients suffering from cancer e.g. after chemotherapy or after radiotherapy when there is marked inflammation of lymph vessel.

I have used this remedy very successfully in cases of lymphangitis due to post mastectomy or lymphangitis due to filarial infection or lymphangitis due to bacterial infection.

Another very important area that I have seen its good use is in the cardiovascular disorders especially cardiac failure, weakness of the cardiac muscles and severe ischemic heart disease like angina pectoris.

It has a marked action on coronary arteries and endocardium; due to this the patient may suffer from frank cardiac failure, cardiac syncope, myocardial infarction, and carditis.

At the level of skin usually one has urticaria, herpes, and pemphigus. I remember that I have also used this remedy in cases of appendicitis, a worse case of esophageal spasm, aplastic anemia, Hodgkin's disease and leukemia.

When you examine the patient usually you will see lot of exhaustion, prostration, tiredness, dropsy, edema, distention and a strong mental picture.

With these few observation mentioned above let me tell you an important case that I saw of an old man whose complaint was difficulty in swallowing, he takes some

medical treatment from his local general practitioner but he is not better. He is a known case of ischemic heart disease and hypertension but that he developed only in his later part of his life. He had no modality for his chief complaint. What I observed was that he was constantly having chewing motion of his jaw but when I examined his mouth and throat practically there was nothing to diagnose.

His speech was little unclear to me, may be because there were no teeth in the mouth and he had a strong fear of suffocation because he felt that he cannot swallow and may be one day he will have suffocation and he will die due to suffocation. His face was mildly swollen, he had salivation, his tongue was moist, and he was thirsty but usually in night hours. I examined his blood pressure which was 160/95 mmHg. He was constipated and frequently had a problem with his urination. There were days when he cannot pass his urine very clearly.

Based on the above symptoms I gave him *Latrodectus mactans* 30C which reduced his pain which gave him relief in his urinary problem and his chewing motion of the jaw totally stopped. It took me about three and a half months to produce this kind of result.

The next case I remember was from an OPD where I saw a child who had an enlarged, inflammed tonsils, with white caseous deposit on it, there was severe pain in the throat while swallowing, also there was swelling around the throat. The child looked quite anxious. On observation there was cracked lip, profuse thirst, there were no other modalities related to the chief complaint. The mother said that it all happened after he had a cold drink. It was a summer time and my prescription was *Bryonia* which did

not help. Later on in the next follow up I examined that his neck was getting little stiff and the mother worried the infection may not produce any extra harm to the child.

I once again took the symptoms of the patient; mother also said that his voice has also changed ever since this inflammation of tonsils has taken place. I start giving *Latrodectus mactans* 30C 8 hourly to the child and within 4 days all the symptomatology of the child disappeared.

Since then *Latrodectus* became a very useful remedy in my practice for tonsillitis. Usually there is no cough, there are not much respiratory symptoms but *Latrodectus* is usually prescribed more on the concomitants especially the thirst which is very important, the extreme degree of pain in the throat which is equally important, the stiffness of the neck and the dryness of the lips.

Let's go to another variety of *Latrodectus* and i.e. *Latrodectus katipo* (New Zealand spider). I never knew much about this venomous spider but I have read about its effect of its bites and its strong affinity on the skin.

I had a case of pemphigus which I was treating which was responding very well to Sulphur and later on to *Calcarea sulphurica* but one day he had an acute infection producing massive cellulitis, I gave Arsenic, Cantharis, Anthracinum but without any results. There was a severe burning pain in the body of the patient. The patient was pale, he was anxious, his pulse was weak , there was excessive swelling and oedema of the feet. This kind of burning pain with excessive oedema which did not respond to the indicated remedies, I was searching in Encyclopedia Homoeopathica by putting the important words of the patient: burning, oedema of the feet,

inflammation of the lymph vessels, pallor of the skin and cellulitis.

I had never used *Latrodectus katipo*, it was my first experience, and I started giving every 3 hourly to the patient and within 15 to 20 days the whole cellulitis of the patient with pemphigus was completely dissolved.

Another *Latrodectus* which has been useful in my practice is *Latrodectus hasselti*. This is one spider which is very well proved. I saw in Hungary, an old lady who complained of discharge from the urethra. She had a history of venereal disease during the Second World War which was treated with some drugs which she is not aware of. She also complained of leucorrhoea which was white but sometimes it was bloody. Her sexual desire was quite strong even though she was old and frequently she had to masturbate once in few months to reduce that desire.

She had a big problem with her digestion, whatever she ate turned into gas, and there was lot of rumbling and gurgling in the whole digestive tract with passage of an offensive flatus. The stools were difficult she had to strain a lot. There was constant sense of fullness in the stomach after eating as well as after drinking. Any emotional disorder will directly affect her digestion like *Chamomilla* or *Colocythis*. Because of her stomach problem her appetite was low.

Emotionally she felt very bad and full of guilt because of her venereal disease that she suffered from and that remained for quite a few years of her life.

I treated her with different remedies like Medorrhinum, Mercury solubilis, Staphysagria, Sulphur with no relief. After almost 9 months of failure I restudied the whole case and I asked her few extra questions. She said that she is extremely depressed because of her illness and at the same time she feels very happy when she sees other people dancing. She said I love to watch folk dance, I myself was a good dancer when I was young but now because of my age I cannot dance but dancing is one thing which I love.

This reminded me of a spider remedy Tarentula or fish remedy like Sepia and a botanical remedy like Ignatia but when I checked the symptoms it never matched Ignatia, Sepia or Tarentula. What I saw was that she had frank symptoms of a very small spider remedy when I repertorised the case with Radar of Latrodectus hasselti.

I never had this remedy so I had to order this remedy from Remedia in Austria, I said you take one dose and report to me after 15 days and if you feel better do not repeat it. After fortnight she informs me that emotionally she felt much better, her digestion is far better than before however the discharges were not so better. I asked her not to repeat and inform me after a month.

She is emotionally feeling better but the physical symptoms are still there. I asked her to repeat one more dose, again the physical symptoms are not better, and emotionally she is still better. After 3 months I gave her one dose of 200C potency of Latrodectus hasselti, this time all her physical symptoms are better along with the emotional problem and she finds relief in almost all the complaints.

The best part to have success in homoeopathy is not to give up but to restudy and restudy. If you find failure in our prescription we should be perseverance and take help of important tools like Encyclopedia Homoeopathica and old journals.

Thank you!