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## REVIEW ARTICLE

### FACETS OF THE HOMOEOPATHY IN BRONCHIAL ASTHMA

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#### Abstract

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**Key Word-** Bronchial Asthma, Homoeopathic Medicines, Mother Tinctures, Miasmatic Approach.

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The incidence and severity of asthma are increasing despite the recent advances in its management. It is an inflammatory condition that is exhibited by wheezing, shortness of breath & cough. Homoeopathic medicines and mother tinctures based on miasmatic grounds and patient's symptomatology significantly reduce respiratory complaints and improve quality of life.

#### INTRODUCTION

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disorder of the airways, in which many cells and cellular elements play a role. Chronic inflammation is associated with airway hyper-responsiveness that leads to recurrent episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and

coughing, particularly at night and in the early morning.<sup>1</sup>

The prevalence of asthma has increased markedly over the past 30 years in developing countries. In developed countries approximately 10% of adults and 15% of children have asthma. The majority of asthmatics have the childhood-onset disease. Most asthmatics have atopy

and often atopic dermatitis (eczema) and/or allergic rhinitis.<sup>2</sup>

### Classification And Pathogenesis<sup>3</sup>

Based on the stimuli initiating bronchial asthma, two broad etiologic types are traditionally described: extrinsic (allergic, atopic) and intrinsic (idiosyncratic, non-atopic) asthma. A third type is a mixed pattern in which the features do not fit clearly into either of the two main types:

- **Extrinsic (atopic, allergic) asthma** - This is the most common type of asthma. It usually begins in childhood or in early adult life. Most patients of this type of asthma have a personal and/or family history of preceding allergic diseases such as rhinitis, urticaria, or infantile eczema. Hypersensitivity to various extrinsic antigenic substances or 'allergens' e.g. house dust, pollens, animal danders, moulds etc. Occupational asthma stimulated by fumes, gases, and organic and chemical dust is a variant of extrinsic asthma. There is an increased level of IgE in the serum and positive skin test.
- **Intrinsic (idiosyncratic, non-atopic) asthma** - This type of asthma develops later in adult life with negative personal or family history of allergy, negative skin test and normal serum levels of IgE. Most of these patients

develop symptom complex after an upper respiratory tract infection.

- **Mixed type-** Many patients do not clearly fit into either of the above two categories and have mixed features of both. Those patients who develop asthma in early life have strong allergic components, while those who develop the disease late tend to be non-allergic. Either type of asthma can be precipitated by cold, exercise, and emotional stress.

### CLINICAL FEATURES<sup>2</sup>

Characteristic clinical features are –

- Cough
- Paroxysms of dyspnea
- Wheezing chest tightness.
- Physical examination can reveal tachypnea, tachycardia
- Pulmonary function testing reveals a reduction in FEV1 (forced expiratory volume in 1 second) PEF (peak expiratory flow)
- Hypoxia can result; Pco<sub>2</sub> is usually reduced due to hyperventilation. Normal or rising Pco<sub>2</sub> can signal impending respiratory failure.

### Investigations<sup>4</sup>

- Chest X-ray: Chest X-ray should be taken to rule out other causes of wheezing and also to rule out the presence of pneumo- thorax.

- Pulmonary Function Tests (PFT): PFT shows the obstructive type of lung disease
- Peak Expiratory Flow (PEF): Serial recordings of PEF may show overnight fall (morning dip) and subsequent rise during the day in patients with asthma. There are increased eosinophils in the sputum and blood. Serum IgE is elevated in atopic asthma.

## DIAGNOSIS

The diagnosis of asthma is predominantly clinical and is based on the combination of the history, lung function and 'other' tests, which allow high, intermediate or low probability of asthma to emerge. The approach may vary from patient to patient and may need to be re-evaluated.<sup>1</sup>

### Differential Diagnosis Of Asthma<sup>4</sup>

- Chronic bronchitis
- Emphysema
- Cystic fibrosis
- Bronchial stenosis
- Mechanical airway obstruction
- Foreign body aspiration
- Vocal cord dysfunction
- Pulmonary embolism

## MANAGEMENT<sup>4</sup>

- Treatment of infection
- Avoidance of allergens and other precipitating factors
- Drugs

- Hyposensitisation.

## HOMOEOPATHIC APPROACH

### Miasmatic Approach -

#### Psoric -

- The coughs of psora are dry, teasing, spasmodic, and annoying. The expectoration is usually mucous, scanty, and tasteless. The salty and sweetish taste of the expectoration is a dependable indication of the combined psoric and syphilitic taints.<sup>5</sup>
- Hypersensitivity of the tracheo-bronchial tree to any allergen is psoric.
- Asthma, which starts in winter is psoric.
- The psoric patient is averse to open air and suffers aggravation during the early morning and in the evening. Amelioration comes from sweating.
- A dry spasmodic cough results from the suppression of measles, skin disease etc. and leads to affection of the lungs.<sup>6</sup>

#### Sycotic -

- Sycotic asthma is devoid of any allergic history.
- Hereditary bronchial asthma is generally sycotic.
- Asthma, starts or aggravates in rainy weather.

- Discharge and expectoration are yellow or greenish/ yellow and there is profuse expectoration with asthma, which is worse during the early morning.
- The coughs of sycosis are usually bronchial.<sup>6</sup>

### **Syphilitic –**

- The expectoration is purulent, greenish-yellow, often offensive; usually sweetish or salty to his taste. We can usually depend upon the salty or sweetish taste as being a characteristic of this dyscrasia.<sup>5</sup>
- Bronchial conditions begin with dyspnoea (nasal allergies are not initially present).
- Asthma, which starts in the summer, is syphilitic.
- Ulcers are present in the respiratory passage.
- There is a paroxysmal cough with a sticky, thread-like discharge.<sup>6</sup>

### **HOMOEOPATHIC MANAGEMENT**

#### **Arsenic album -**

- Asthma worse midnight; worse lying on back.
- Expectoration scanty, frothy. Darting pain through upper third of right lung.
- Wheezing respiration. haemoptysis with pain between shoulders; burning heat all over.
- Cough dry, as from sulphur fumes.

- Unable to lie down; fears suffocation.
- Asthma, agg. by taking cold, in mid summer.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Natrum sulph -**

- Humid asthma in children; with every change to wet weather; with every fresh cold; always worse in damp, rainy weather; sputa green, greenish, copious.<sup>8</sup>
- Must hold chest when coughing, cough with thick ropy, greenish expectoration; chest feels all gone.
- Constant desire to take deep, long breath.
- Every fresh cold brings on attack of asthma.
- Empty, all-gone, weak feeling in chest, must support it with both hands when coughing.<sup>7</sup>
- Asthma, sycotic; in children as a constitutional remedy, agg. early morning.<sup>9</sup>

#### **Dulcamara -**

- Asthma with dyspnoea.
- Cough worse cold, wet weather, with free expectoration.
- Whooping-cough, with excessive secretion of mucus.
- Winter coughs, dry and teasing.<sup>7</sup>
- Cough caused by tickling in the back of throat; in prolonged fits; with much loose easy

expectoration; after physical exertion.<sup>9</sup>

### **Carbo veg. -**

- Asthma in aged with blue skin.
- Cough with itching in larynx; spasmodic with gagging and vomiting of mucus.
- Whooping cough, especially in beginning.
- Wheezing and rattling of mucus in chest. Occasional spells of long coughing attacks.
- Cough, with burning in chest; worse in evening, in open air, after eating and talking.<sup>7</sup>
- Cheyne-Stokes breathing in organic heart disease.<sup>9</sup>

### **Bryonia -**

- Cough, dry, at night; must sit up; worse after eating or drinking, with vomiting.
- Frequent desire to take a long breath; must expand lungs.
- Difficult, quick respiration; worse every movement; caused by stitches in chest.
- Cough, with feeling as if chest would fly to pieces; presses his head on sternum; must support chest.
- Expectoration brick shade, tough, and falls like lumps of jelly.

- Sharp Stitches in chest or at right scapula, aggravation by deep breathing and coughing.<sup>9</sup>

### **Spongia -**

- Cough, dry, sibilant, like a saw driven through a pine board. 8
- Cough abates after eating or drinking, especially warm drinks.
- Chest weak; can scarcely talk, Laryngeal phthisis.<sup>7</sup>
- Suffocation, as from a plug, valve or leaf in larynx; wakes him; with violent painful palpitation and blue lips; with heavy sweat.<sup>9</sup>

### **Sulphur -**

- Difficult respiration; wants windows open
- Loose cough; worse talking, morning, greenish, purulent, sweetish expectoration.
- Chest feels heavy; stitches, with heart feeling too large and palpitating pleuritic exudations
- Flushes of heat in chest rising to head.
- Dyspnoea in middle of night, relieved by sitting up.<sup>7</sup>
- Asthma at night, attacks every eight days, following swelling of hemorrhoids, alternating with fits of gout or psoriasis from suppressed eruptions or discharges.<sup>10</sup>

**Pulsatilla -**

- Dry cough in evening and at night; must sit up in bed to get relief; and loose cough in the morning, with copious mucous expectoration.
- Pain as from ulcer in middle of chest.
- Expectoration bland, thick, bitter, greenish.
- Short breath, anxiety, and palpitation when lying on left side.
- Smothering sensation on lying down.<sup>7</sup>

**Phosphorus -**

- Cough from tickling in throat; worse, cold air, reading, laughing, talking, from going from warm room into cold air.
- Sputa rusty, blood-colored, or purulent.
- Nervous coughs provoked by strong odors, entrance of a stranger; worse in the presence of strangers; worse lying upon left side; in cold room.<sup>7</sup>
- Chest; full; heavy; pains into throat or right arm; or alternating sides; stitches in left upper chest; rattling agg. cold drinks.<sup>9</sup>
- Heaviness of chest, as if a weight were lying on it.<sup>8</sup>

**Sambucus nigra -**

- Chest oppressed with pressure in stomach, and nausea Hoarseness with tenacious mucus in larynx.

- Child awakes suddenly, nearly suffocating, sits up, turns blue.
- Millar's asthma.<sup>7</sup>
- Whistling breathing spasms of glottis. <sup>9</sup>
- Spasmodic paroxysm of suffocation at night, with tears, great agitation, and tossing of the hands, Quick, wheezing and crowing breathing.<sup>10</sup>

**Homoeopathic Mother Tincture****Blatta Orientalis Q-**

- Asthma, especially when associated with bronchitis.
- Much pus-like mucous.
- Asthma worsened during night, and lying down; better by expectation.
- Previous Research: A prospective, non-randomised, open-label, observational study was conducted on effects of *Blatta orientalis* on treatment of Bronchial Asthma. Out of 120 patients, 100 had completed the study with follow-up of 6 months. A significant difference was found in pre- and post-treatment spirometry. The study findings of this study is encouraging enough to prescribe *Blatta orientalis* in potency in cases of bronchial asthma. <sup>11</sup>

**Cassia Sophera Q –**

- Dry cough with irritation (tickling sensation in throat), with stiching pain in the lower chest, diminished (or lack

of) appetite; increased thirst for cold water, **must** drink every hour, aggravation on walking, coughing, amelioration lying down, hot drinks.

- Cough with pain on left side of the chest; thick, yellow expectoration ; redness, pain, itching, and watery discharge from the eyes. Amel. every morning, evening. Difficult breathing (dyspnoea)(preceded by cough).<sup>12</sup>

#### **Grindelia Robinia Q-**

- Asthma, with profuse tenacious expectoration.
- Cannot breath when lying down.
- Cheyne – stokes respiration

#### **Aspidosperma Q -**

- “Want of breath” during exertion.
- Pulmonary stenosis.
- Previous Research: In a previous study 50 patients were taken up (after diagnosed), to be having Bronchial asthma with the help of complete history taking, clinical examination of the patients, investigations and managed with homoeopathic medicine i.e. Aspidosperma. Result showed that out of 50 patients of Bronchial asthma, Aspidosperma were prescribed in which 26 (52%) patients showed marked improvement in their symptoms, 12 (24%) patients showed moderate improvement, 8 (16%) patients showed mild improvement and

remaining 4 (8%) didn't respond to the medicine i.e. status quo. From this it is concluded that Aspidosperma is effective in cases of Bronchial asthma.

#### **Justicia Adhatoda Q ]-**

- Used in teasing cough, in coryza, pneumonia, bronchitis, phthisis and for clearing the lungs.
- Very beneficial in the first stage of phthisis and all kinds of pulmonary diseases with discharge of blood in the phlegm.
- Whooping cough of children with gagging after coughing and a cyanotic face.

#### **Ocimum Sanctum Q -**

- Distressing dry cough, expectoration of phlegm streaked with blood.

#### **Lobelia Inflata Q -**

- Asthma attacks with weakness preceded by pricking all over.
- Sensation of pressure or weight in chest; better by rapid walking.
- Dyspnea from constriction of chest, worse by exertion.

#### **Senega Q -**

- Bronchial catarrh with much mucous; sensation of oppression and weight on chest.
- Difficult raising of cough, profuse mucous, in the aged.

- Complaints aggravated during walking and ameliorated by bending head backward.

#### **Areliac Racemosa Q<sup>7</sup> -**

- Dry cough coming on after first sleep, about middle of night.
- Asthma worse after first sleep, with tickling in throat.
- Constriction of chest.
- The least current of air causes sneezing with copious, watery, excoriating nasal discharge of salty acrid taste.

#### **Pothos Foetidus Q -**

- Spasmodic croup
- Troublesome respiration, with sudden feeling of anguish and sweat.
- Asthma relieved by stool.

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