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REVIEW ARTICLE

ASTHMA & ITS HOMOEOPATHIC APPROACH

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Abstract

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Asthma is the most common respiratory disease in India.

Despite significant improvement in the diagnosis and management of this disorder, the majority of Indian with

asthma poorly controlled. In most patients, however, control can be achieved through the use of avoidance measures and

appropriate pharmacological interventions. This article

provides a review of current literature and guidelines for appropriate diagnosis and management of asthma in adults

and children.

INTRODUCTION

Asthma is defined as a chronic inflammatory disease of the airways. The chronic inflammation is associated with airway hyper responsiveness (an exaggerated airway – narrowing response to specific triggers such as viruses, allergens and exercise) that leads to recurrent episode s of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and

Coughing that can vary over time and intensity. Symptoms episodes are generally associated with widespread, but variable, airflow obstruction within the lungs that is usually reversible either spontaneously or with appropriate asthma treatment.

Asthma remains the most common chronic respiratory disease in India, affecting approximately 10% of

population. It is also the most common chronic disease of childhood. Although asthma is often believed to be a disorder localized to the lung, current evidence indicates that it may represent a component of systemic airway disease involving the entire respiratory tract, and this is supported by the fact that asthma frequently coexists with other atopic disorders, particularly allergic rhinitis.

Asthma is a chronic illness involving the respiratory system in which the airway occasionally constricts, becomes inflamed, and is lined with excessive amounts of mucus, often in response to one or more triggers. These episodes may be triggered by such things as exposure to an environmental stimulant (or allergen) such as cold air, warm air, moist air, exercise or exertion, or emotional stress. In children, the most common triggers are viral illnesses such as those that cause the common cold.

This airway narrowing causes symptoms such as wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and coughing. The airway constriction responds to bronchodilators. Between episodes, most patients feel well but can have mild symptoms and they may remain short of breath after exercise for longer periods of time than the unaffected individual. The symptoms of asthma, which can range from mild to life threatening, can usually

be controlled with a combination of drugs and environmental changes.

PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

Inflamed airways and bronchoconstriction in asthma. Airways narrowed as a result of the inflammatory response cause wheezing.

Bronchoconstriction: During an asthma episode, inflamed airways react to environmental triggers such as smoke, dust, or pollen, the airways narrow and produce excess mucus, making it difficult to breathe. In essence, asthma is the result of an immune response in the bronchial airways.

The airways of asthmatics are “hypersensitive” to certain triggers, also known as stimuli. In response to exposure to these triggers, the bronchi (large airways) contract into spasm (an “asthma attack”). Inflammation soon follows, leading to a further narrowing of the airways and excessive mucus production, which leads to coughing and other breathing difficulties.

Stimuli: Allergens from nature. Typically inhaled, which include waste from common household pets, such as the house dust, mite and cockroach, grass pollen, mould spores, and epithelial cells. Indoor air pollution from volatile organic compounds, including perfumes and perfume products. Examples include soap, dishwashing liquid, laundry detergent,

fabric softener, paper tissues, shampoo, cosmetics, deodorant, air freshener, and product such as oil-based paints.

Early childhood infection, especially viral respiratory infection. However, person of any age can have asthma triggered by colds and other respiratory infections even though their normal stimuli might be from another category (e.g. pollen) and absent at the time of infection. 80% of asthma attacks in adults and 60% in children are caused by respiratory viruses.

Hormonal changes in adolescent girls and adult women associated with their menstrual cycle can lead to worsening of asthma. Some women also experience a worsening of their asthma during pregnancy whereas others find no significant changes, and in other women their asthma improves during pregnancy.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

In some individual asthma is characterized by chronic respiratory impairment. In others it is an intermittent illness marked by episodic symptoms that may result from a number of triggering events, including upper respiratory infection, stress, air borne allergens, air pollutants (such as smoke or traffic fumes) or exercise. Some or all of the or following symptom maybe present in those with asthma: dyspnoea, wheezing, stridor, coughing and an inability for physical

exertion. Some asthmatic has severe shortness of breath and tightening of the lungs never wheezes or has stridor and their symptoms may be confused with a COPD -type disease.

An acute exacerbation of asthma is referred to as an asthma attack. The clinical hallmark of an attack are shortness of breath (dyspnoea) and either wheezing or stridor. Some patient present primarily with coughing and in the late stages of an attack, Air motion may be so impaired that no wheezing may be heard. When present the cough may sometimes produce clear sputum. The onset may be sudden, with the sense of constriction in the chest, breathing become difficult, and wheezing occur (primarily upon expiration but can be in both respiratory phases).

Signs of an asthmatic episode include wheezing, rapid breathing (tachypnoea), prolonged expiration, a rapid heart rate (tachycardia) rhonchus lung sound (audible through a stethoscope) and over inflation of the chest.

During very severe attack, an asthma sufferer can turn blue from lack of oxygen, and can experience chest pain or even loss of consciousness. Just before loss of consciousness there is a chance that the patient will feel numbness in the limbs and palms may start to sweat. Feet may become icy cold. Severe asthma attack

which may not be responsive to standard treatments (status asthmatics) are life threatening and may lead to respiratory arrest and death. Despite severity of symptoms during an asthmatic episode between attack and asthmatic may show few or even no sign of the disease

HOMOEOPATHIC APPROACH

In managing asthmatic cases his/her present history, time of occurrence, modalities, condition worsening or ameliorating asthma, time modalities, accompanying symptoms, concomitants, past history of major illness, history of skin disease, allergy, urticarial, family history of asthma should be asked & concentrated. Treatment history should be taken including asthmatic medications, steroids, inhalers should be asked. Steroids & inhalers should not be immediately stopped if patient taking it since long period it should be slowly decreased & then completely stopped as patient starts feeling well without these medications. To control acute attacks of asthma & Drug-dependent asthma cases, with help of specific homoeopathic medicines for Asthma-like *Aspidosperma*, *Blatta orientalis*, *Senega*, *Grindelia*, *Justicia* etc should be given in tincture form on as per indications. Constitutional treatment is the best to cure asthma permanently. For recurrent asthmatic attacks Anti-miasmatic

medicine should be added like *Medorrhinum*, *Sulphur*, *Thuja* etc.

Reportorial Approach

Common rubrics on Asthma from Synthesis Repertory

- MIND - ANGER - accompanied by - asthmatic respiration
- MIND - LAUGHING - asthma; with
- MIND - WEEPING - spasmodic - asthma; with
- HEAD - PAIN - alternating with - asthma
- NOSE - SNEEZING - hay asthma, with
- FACE - DISCOLORATION - bluish - asthma, in
- MOUTH - ODOR (breath) - fish brine, before asthma attack
- THROAT - PAIN - stitching - asthma, before
- STOMACH - ANXIETY - asthma, in
- STOMACH - ERUCTATIONS - asthma; with
- RECTUM - DIARRHEA - asthma, then
- FEMALE GENITALIA/SEX - MENSES - suppressed - asthma, with
- RESPIRATION - ASTHMATIC - hay fever, during
- RESPIRATION - ASTHMATIC - miner's asthma, from coal dust
- COUGH - ASTHMATIC

- CHEST - CONSTRICTION - asthmatic
- CHEST - DROPSY - asthma, with
- CHEST - EMPTINESS, sensation of - asthma, during
- CHEST - ERUPTIONS - rash - alternating with asthma
- EXTREMITIES - DISCOLORATION - Upper limbs - blue - asthma; with
- EXTREMITIES - ERUPTIONS - Upper limbs - rash - alternating with asthma
- EXTREMITIES - ERUPTIONS - Forearm - pimples - alternating with asthma
- EXTREMITIES - ERUPTIONS - Forearm - rash - alternating with asthma
- EXTREMITIES - PAIN - Joints - gouty - alternating with - asthma
- SKIN - ERUPTIONS - alternating with - asthma
- SKIN - ERUPTIONS - rash - alternating with - asthma
- SKIN - ERUPTIONS - rash - oppression of chest and alternating with asthma; with
- SKIN - ERUPTIONS - urticaria - alternating with - asthma
- SKIN - ERUPTIONS - urticaria - asthmatic troubles; in

- GENERALS - FAINTNESS - asthma, from

Homoeopathic Therapeutics

Common Homoeopathic medicines for asthma:

1. **Antim Tart:** Useful for Asthma with rattling of mucus in chest with pale, cyanotic face, prostration, coldness, cold sweat on forehead, must sit up to get air < 3 a.m. There is great rattling of mucus in the chest but very little expectoration and that too without relief.
2. **Apis Mellifica:** Useful for Asthma with suffocative feeling. Patient feels that how he can take another breath.
3. **Argentum Nitricum:** It is useful for pure nervous asthma with spasm of the respiratory muscles and marked dyspnoea worse in crowded, stuffy or warm room. Patient wants doors and windows open, like cold air, cold drinks, cold things,
4. **Arsenic album:** It is prime remedy in asthma with < after midnight and lying down and great anguish and restlessness. Also useful for asthma complicated with emphysema – expiration being much prolonged. Patient must sit up and incline chest forward. There is great dyspnoea with despair which abates as soon as raise frothy saliva or thick mucus sometimes even streaked with blood

- < cold things, lying down, midnight, 1-2pm, 12-2am > warmth, warm food.
5. **Aralia Racemosa:** Useful for asthma in which dry, wheezing respiration with sense of impending suffocation and rapidly increasing dyspnoea < inspiration, There is loud, musical whistling during inspirations and expiration but louder during inspirer. He could not lie down otherwise he would suffocate if he did not sit up. Patient has constant desire to clear chest so that he could breathe easier. Expectoration at first scanty then more copious warm and scanty.
 6. **Ars. Iod** - Useful for occasional asthmatic attacks in pthysical and psoric patient < night. Patient must sit up to breathe. General feeble expiration accompanied by great debility and burning in chest.
 7. **Bromium:** It is useful for asthma of sailors as soon as they go ashore. Patient feels as if he could not get air enough into lungs, expands his chest to the utmost and breathes very deeply, as air does not go in enough on account of narrowing of the opening of larynx or constriction of glottis. Sensation as if air passages were full of smoke. Dyspnoea < lying down, night. Sensation as if breathing through a sponge. < Inspiration, lying down in bed, seashore.
 8. **Cuprum Metallicum:** It is useful in asthma when the spasmodic element predominated with constriction of the throat, face gets blue and almost goes into convulsions. Violent attacks comes suddenly and cease suddenly. < At night, before and during menses, from mental emotion.
 9. **Drosera:** It is useful for asthma of consumptives. There is periodical fits of rapid, deep barking, choking, prolonged and incessant cough. Cough seems to come from the abdomen, takes the breath away, compel holding the sides followed by retching, vomiting first of ingest then of mucus. Asthma when taking with contraction of throat with every word uttered. Harassing cough as soon as head touches the pillow at night not during day.
 10. **Ferrum Metallicum:** It is useful for asthma worse after 12 O clock, at night. Dry tickling cough < morning, > lying down. Dyspnoea better by gentle walking. <Night, emotion, anger, heat & cold.> gentle motion, leaning head on something.
 11. **Graphites:** Useful for spasmodic asthma. There is suffocative spells arousing from sleep, must jump out of bed and eat something to ease the

- difficulty of breathing. Patient is sensitive to cold in winter and heat in summer, suited to fat, chilly, costive. <In warm room and desires open air.
12. **Grindelia:** Useful for asthma with stoppage of breathing on falling asleep, wakes with a start and grapes for breath. There is profuse, tough, whitish expectoration which relieves the suffering.
 13. **Ipecac:** It is useful for asthma in stout persons of lax fibre, adult or child, who are sensitive to warm, moist atmosphere. There is a constant feeling of constriction of chest with shortness of breath together with a violent, incessant, wheezing cough and rattling of mucus in chest, yet none is expectorated. There is threatened suffocation with very difficult expiration, worse from least motion. Ipecac is followed by arsenic.
 14. **Lobelia:** It is useful for Asthma with great oppression and weak sensation in the chest which seems to come from the epigastrium, spreading into the chest with nausea, profuse salivation and a feeling of a lump in the stomach; often preceded by pricking all over, even to fingers and toes.
< From any exertion, slightest motion, cold, tobacco.
 15. **Lycopodium:** Useful for Asthma from abdominal irritation with marked flatulence. Asthma better by belching and by hard fanning.
 16. **Kali bichromicum:** Useful for Asthma worse from 3 to 4 am liable to return in summer when chilly; relieved from sitting up and bending forward and finally by the expectoration of stringy or ropy yellow mucus. It differs from Arsenic in this feature of tenacious mucus.
 17. **Natrum Sulph:** Useful for asthma excited or made worse by every spell of damp weather; hydrogenoid constitution, sycotic basis. Dyspnoea with rattling in chest at 4-5 a.m., cough with profuse, thick, glairy, greenish expectoration. There is looseness of bowel after each attack. Patient must sit up and hold the chest during the attack. Indicated for Asthma in children.
 18. **Nux Vomica:** Useful for asthmatic attacks brought on by gastric disturbances, in persons of irritable, bilious temperament, with a feeling of fullness and oppression in stomach, particularly after a heavy meal. A constricted feeling at the lower part of chest, relieved by loosening clothing, belching and by recumbent position, raising the trunk and turning to the other side.

19. **Zingiber:** Used in severe paroxysms of asthma of gastric origin, coming at night towards morning, but with no anxiety.

Rare Remedy for Asthma:

Commonly used rare & specific homoeopathic medicines for Asthma are Grindelia, Senega, Pothas, Blatta Orientalis, Aralia Racemosa, Justicia, China etc. It should be used as per the indications.

Justicia: It is useful for acute catarrhal condition of the respiratory tract. Useful for coryza fluent, acrid with violent sneezing, coughing or asthmatic attacks. Cough with tightness of chest as if it would burst with bronchial rattle, obstruction of breath and sneezing.

< closed room, dust, noise, eating.

Senega: Senega known as Snake-root affects the mucous membranes causing catarrhal symptoms especially of the respiratory tract and bladder. Dry, scrapping in chest < talking. Cough is incessant, strangling, violent, shaking, choking ends in sneezing < lying down at night, side or evening. Loose rattle in chest but the clear, profuse sputum is tough and slips back again. Chest is sore from coughing, pressure, sneezing or moving arms, in spots as if bruised, stitching pains on stooping. Sensation as if a crushing weight or weakness starts in chest. Chest feels as if too narrow. Useful for

Asthmatic bronchitis of old people with chronic nephritis or emphysema.

Aspidosperma: It is called Digitalis of the lungs (Hale). It removes the temporary obstruction to the oxidation of the blood by stimulation of respiratory centers, increasing oxidation and excretion of carbonic acid. It is an effective remedy in many cases of asthma. It stimulates the respiratory centres and increases the oxygen in blood. 'Want of breath' during excretion is the guiding symptoms. It should be given in tincture 10 drop doses every hourly in acute.

Blatta Orientalis: It is remedy for Asthma when associated with Bronchitis. Indicated after Arsenic when this is insufficient. Cough with dyspnoea in bronchitis and phthisis. It acts best in stout and corpulent patients. It should be given in lower potencies during an acute attacks. It acts better after the spasm for the remaining cough.

Some cured cases

Patient nameV. Rana Age 39, male , lives in Delhi, main complaints difficulty in breathing, extreme weakness fear of unwanted disease, heaviness in chest with difficulty in breathing ,difficulty in ascending stairs, suffered from covid twice, aggravation usually after midnight. Thinking about future and about her daughter, party loving person enjoy parties before this type of attacks. On

taking complete history medicine selected was arsenic album 30, twice daily for 5 days.

After medication he feels much better and able to do his routine work, placebo continues for next 15 days.

Another case of arsenic album

Patient name.....P.Bajaj age 66, female, diabetic and hypertensive from 15 years, lives in Dwarka Delhi, Diabetes and hypertension controlled with allopathic medicine. Main complaint for which she consulted me was dyspnoea on exertion right side sciatica, with extreme weakness, < sleep,> eructation, talkative fear of death, anxious, desire for cold water, talking about death and about spirituality. After proper case taking medicine prescribed was arsenic album 1M, 3 dose at interval of 10 minutes. Symptoms much improved after medicine patient on placebo for next 15 days.

Patient nameS.Rawat, age 35, female, difficulty in breathing when anxious, complaints aggravates after death of near and dear one, black discoloration on shin bone after waxing, apply some allopathic creams on it but no relief then she consulted me for the same, main complaints itching on spots, feel embarrassed on bearing dress when legs are exposed, happy lively person, Enjoy parties anxious about future, fear of death after some mishappening in family

disturbed sleep due to fear. First I prescribed her ignitia it gives initial relief but processes stopped after some time then after recase taking medicine selected on totality of symptoms was arsenic alb 1M, 3 dose at 10 minutes interval after that no repetition of symptoms, sleep improved and enjoying life

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