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The proving of Natrium arsenicosum and clinically confirmed symptoms

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Abstract

In its crude state, the substance Sodium arsenicosum is a strong poison, which is used in the chemicals industry. However, in potentized form it displays major healing abilities. In the 19th century, provings in C6, D3 and D30 were carried out revealing many interesting symptoms, but few mental symptoms emerged.

In order to test the efficacy of Natrium arsenicosum, it was subject to a proving in 2006 using C200 (Korsakoff). This entire process was conducted as a double-blind, placebo-controlled trial over the course of 6 weeks, and met the ECCH proving criteria. The provers were healthy volunteers consisting of homoeopaths and students of homoeopathy. 14 of the provers received Natrium arsenicosum C200, while 5 provers received a placebo.

The proving not only confirmed the remedy's well-known action on the eyes, nose and respiratory tract, but also contributed many interesting new symptoms, especially mental and sleep-related ones. Many of these symptoms have since been clinically confirmed, further broadening the beneficial use of Natrium arsenicosum. Due to the mental picture obtained by this proving, it is now easier to differentiate Natrium arsenicosum from other similar remedies.

The proving of Natrium arsenicosum provides the homoeopathic community with valuable new symptoms, a clearer mental picture of the remedy, as well as new and interesting therapeutic possibilities.

Natrium arsenicosum: the Substance

The colourless crystals of sodium arsenate contain approximately 24% arsenic. Sodium arsenate is very harmful to the environment, especially to water and soil. In humans it is toxic by ingestion, inhalation or transmission through the skin and may cause the following complaints: vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pain, muscular cramps, headache, dyspnoea and severe bleeding. If the condition worsens internal collapse and death is possible. Even small concentrations can be lethal. The substance is highly carcinogenic (especially causing lung cancer).

Natrium arsenicosum: Historical and Contemporary use

Sodium arsenate is widely used as a wood preservative, in pesticides and formerly also in medical preparations. As late as the 19th century, it was used in cotton dyeing and in printing. In conventional medicine, it was mainly used until 1970 in the treatment of leukaemia, psoriasis and asthma.

Natrium arsenicosum: Homeopathy

In the 19th century, provings, especially by Imbert-Gourbeyre were carried out in C6, D3 and D30 and revealed many interesting symptoms, but only a few corresponding mental symptoms. The main clinical applications of Natrium arsenicosum are diphtheria, and diseases of the eyes and nose. It is

recommended for severe inflammation of the nose and sinuses, with pain at the root of the nose. It has also proven useful in the treatment of asthma and bronchitis. Dr. Mohinder Singh Jus repeatedly confirmed the effect of Natrium arsenicosum in cases of persistent weakness after recuperating from influenza (Jus, 2004).

Natrium arsenicosum: Proving Method

In 2006 Natrium arsenicosum was proved in C200 (Korsakov) (B.K. Bose Foundation, Switzerland: Dr. Mohinder Singh Jus, Dr. Martine Cachin Jus. Dr. Nicolienne Potgieter, Nathalie Huser). The proving was conducted as a double-blind, placebo-controlled trial over 6 weeks and met the ECCH proving criteria. The provers were healthy volunteers consisting of homoeopaths and students of homeopathy. 14 of the provers received Natrium arsenicosum C200, while 5 provers received a placebo.

Natrium arsenicosum: The Proving

In this proving a total of 260 symptoms have been obtained, of which 120 are new. The remaining 140 symptoms originate from the Materia Medica of Allen, Hering and J.H. Clarke, and were confirmed by the provers.

The numerous new mental and general symptoms that came to light during this proving were very encouraging. Forgetfulness, confusion, concentration problems, fatigue and irritability at trivial matters, as well as horrible nightmares are among the main symptoms of Natrium arsenicosum.

This remedy contains both natrium components (e.g. runny nose, forgetfulness, confusion, general dryness) and arsenic components (e.g. restlessness, nightmares, irritability), and in combination it has also produced many new symptoms. On a physical level it showed a clear effect on catarrhal complaints such as colds, sinusitis, cough and sore throat as well as cardiac symptoms or stabbing joint pain.

Due to limited time, we have summarized the main symptoms of this proving:

Mind

- Concentration problems and confusion, < afternoon, > evening, > after a short nap
- Not able to read anything, unable to concentrate on the text. Letters appear blurry, cannot understand what is being read
- Concentration problems, dullness and mental fatigue
- Has trouble following a conversation, shows difficulty understanding what was said
- Cannot think clearly, finds it difficult to retrieve what has been learned. An empty feeling in the head
- Forgetfulness. In the middle of a sentence, forgets what he wanted to write, forgets the water boiling on the stove, forgets schoolbooks at home. Feels like he doesn't know anything; a feeling of forgetting everything
- Confusion of mind. Feels totally confused, mentally overwhelmed.
- Restlessness. Fidgety. Has a desire for outdoor exercise
- Irritability, anger, irritated over everything. Irritated towards her children and family. Shouts, screams, scolds, feels > afterwards
- Depressed

- Severe fatigue, weakness. Must yawn all the time. Persistent tiredness throughout the day; would like to stay in bed all day if possible
- Apathy, indifference, lack of motivation
- Unstable, shifting moods
- Weepy. Cries while listening to or telling sad stories
- Aversion to unknown people, to crowds, > in the company of known persons (family members, partners)
- Difficulties in making decisions, insecure
- Clumsy; lets everything fall out of his hands. Burns himself while cooking.

Head

- Headache along with concentration problems. Feeling of pressure in the head, forehead and eyes, > closing the eyes, > resting
- Dizziness, drowsiness, with pressure in the occiput; tendency to fall forwards, > lying down

Eyes/ears

- Eye symptoms < morning
- Whitish, sticky mucus in the eyes; eyes are agglutinated in the morning when waking up.
- Tired, heavy eyelids. Eyes are constantly closing when reading. Text appears blurry. Desire to close the eyes.
- Burning of the eyes and blood rushes to the conjunctiva in case of catarrh of the nose.
- Bad hearing. Feeling of cotton wool in the ears
- Eyes heavy and painful eyeballs.

Nose/throat

- Catarrhal complaints of the nasal mucous membrane
- Nose constantly blocked, < at night, < in the morning. Must sleep at night with mouth open.
- Stuffy feeling in the nose and chest.
- Dry, bloody crusts in the nose, after their removal blood flows.
- Dryness of the throat.
- Cold with abundant secretion of thick, yellow-greenish mucus. Drops from posterior nares
- Compressive pain at the root of the nose and in the forehead; catarrh.
- Dull pain at the root of the nose and the supraorbital area; feeling of fullness in the head and face.

Stomach and Abdomen

- Nausea along with headache, or with heart palpitations
- Nausea < after eating
- Gas formation in stomach and abdomen, constantly burping and releasing bad smelling flatus
- Stitching pain in the left lower abdomen
- Appetite increased
- Or no appetite, no thirst.
- Dry mouth, dry tongue with increased thirst.
- General state > after eating.

Respiratory tract

- Catarrhal complaints of the larynx, trachea and bronchi
- Difficulty in breathing, < physical exertion.
- Cough with yellow phlegm, which is difficult to expectorate
- Dry cough, with a feeling of oppression and tightness in the middle of the upper third of the chest. Painful, dry cough throughout the day

Heart

- Anxiety in the heart, pressure in the chest, < with least effort, < lying on left side; pulse weak, fast and intermittent; wants to be left alone, feels hopeless
- Palpitations, < emotional excitement, < physical exertion, < thinking about it; Sweating along with palpitations.
- Anxiety, pressure on the chest with desire to inhale deeply, which does not improve condition.
- Radiating pain from the heart to the left arm.
- Stinging or pulling sensation in the chest.
- Sharp, stabbing pain below the seventh rib.
- Feels the heartbeat clearly.

Extremities

- Restless legs and feet
- Legs feel heavy; tiredness in the legs as if from too much effort.
- Rheumatic pain in the right arm.
- Stabbing joint pain (foot, hand, toe, knee joint), < movement, > pressure, rubbing.
- The pain shoots from the hip joint to the knee, < walking
- Cramps in the calf muscles, extending downwards.
- Shivering, pricking coldness along the thighs, back and arms
- Cold hands, arms, feet and nose

Skin

- Profuse night sweating on chest, back and head.
- Massive sweating during physical exertion. Sweats very quickly, especially on the head.
- Chilly, sensitive to cold/cold air. Wants to wrap himself in warm clothes.

Sleep

- Tired, sleepy, a feeling of heaviness in the body.
- Restless, disturbed sleep, wakes up very often, waking up as if by a fright; waking up from frightful dreams; wakes up between 4-6 a.m.
- Sleeps on the back.
- Unrefreshing sleep.

Dreams

- Intense and unpleasant dreams. Nightmares.
- Violent, brutal dreams of torture, murder, manslaughter and death, dead people and corpses
- Dreams: of being naked; that he will be hurt by broken glass; of water, of people and animals drowning; of being imprisoned and escaping

Clinical indications

- Weakness, tiredness; after influenza, mononucleosis, gastrointestinal flu; after chemotherapy, radiation treatment, or after anaesthesia
- Old age complaints
- Irritability
- Depression, burnout
- Coryza
- Inflammation of the eyes
- Sinusitis
- Asthma
- Sleeping disorders, nightmares

Clinically confirmed symptoms and clinical experience

Thanks to this proving, we were able to gather valuable experience with Natrium arsenicosum in several cases at our clinic. In our experience it is often indicated in cases of extreme weakness and irritability after an infectious disease. Furthermore we had several very interesting cases of sleeping disorder due to frightful dreams and horrible nightmares where Natrium arsenicosum brought great relief.

In some cases Psorinum was used successfully as a complement to Natrium arsenicosum.

The following 30 symptoms of this homeopathic proving have been confirmed in our homeopathic clinic:

1. Severe fatigue, weakness, as from aching muscles after exertion
2. Apathy, indifference, lack of motivation, hopelessness.
3. Depressed.
4. Would prefer to stay in bed all day.
5. Heavy head, with concentration problems.
6. Great amount of fatigue
7. Easily irritated by trivial issues.
8. Clumsy.
9. Feeling of cotton wool in the ears.
10. Burning of the eyes in case of catarrh of the nose.
11. Catarrhal complaints of the nasal mucous membrane, coryza.
12. Dizziness, headache.
13. Dizziness, with pressure in the occiput, > lying down
14. Headache along with concentration problems.
15. Dry throat.
16. Nausea < after eating
17. Appetite increased. The combination of extreme weakness with very good appetite after an acute infection, was a key symptom for several successful prescriptions.
18. No thirst.
19. Pain in the lower abdomen.
20. Difficulty in breathing, < physical exertion.
21. Dry cough. - Anxiety in the heart, pressure in the chest, < with least effort, palpitations, < emotional excitement.
22. Pressure on the chest with desire to inhale deeply, which does not improve condition.
23. Pain below or in the ribs.

24. Legs feel heavy; tiredness in the legs as if from too much effort.
25. Profuse night sweat, especially on the back.
26. Profuse sweating during physical exertion.
27. Chilly, sensitive to cold/cold air > warmth.
28. Unrefreshing sleep.
29. Very frightful dreams; dreams of death, torture, murder, corpses; waking up suddenly from frightful dreams.
30. General state > after eating.

Conclusion

Our aim was to make a contribution to homoeopathy by extensively proving an insufficiently proved remedy according to the laws of classical homoeopathy.

With this work we extended the symptomatic picture of Natrium arsenicosum; we gained many new symptoms, including those of the mind, and very valuable dream and sleep-related symptoms.

Also through this proving, it is now easier to differentiate Natrium arsenicosum from other similar remedies, such as Arsenicum album, Kalium carbonicum, Natrium muriaticum or Psorinum. Psorinum in addition has proven to be a valuable complement to Natrium arsenicosum.

The combination of extreme weakness, irritability and increased appetite after an acute infection was the key for several successful prescriptions. The effect of Natrium arsenicosum in sleeping disorders accompanied by strong, horrible nightmares opens up a previously unknown field of application.

This proving has clearly shown the great healing power of Natrium arsenicosum and it provides the homoeopathic community with valuable new symptoms, a clearer mental picture, as well as new and interesting therapeutic possibilities.

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