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ARTICLE

Title: Fever patterns: In view of homoeopathy

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ABSTRACT

Fever, elevated body temperature is the primary response of the body in reaction to any inflammation or infection in the body. Fever patterns have been studied since olden days to evaluate the origin of fever. Analyzing fever patterns aids in individualizing the homoeopathic medicines, bringing about rapid and complete cure.

Keywords: *Fever, fever patterns, homoeopathy*

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INTRODUCTION

Fever is the temporary increase in body's core temperature in response to any infection or inflammation in the body. It is one of the cardinal symptoms produced by the body indicating that there is something out of order with the normal functioning of the body. Normal temperature of the human body is approximately 37 degrees celsius and varies by about 0.5 degree celsius throughout the day.^[1]

Normal body temperature is maintained by thermoregulatory center present in the hypothalamus. Fever is caused by disturbance in regulation of body's temperature caused by pyrogenic cytokines, pyrogens in response to inflammation and infection.^[2] It is an integral part in body's defense mechanism against the infection, increased body temperature interferes with the reproduction of bacteria and viruses and also enhances the immunological response.^[3-4]

Febrile response is the primary manifestation in pathogenesis, clinical presentation and prognosis of the disease. In older times when many diagnostic tools were not present analyzing the fever curves helped in differentiating between febrile illnesses. The study of the nature of the fever helps in identifying the disease and hence the better management of the case.

Frequently fever is associated with chills and rigor to reduce the increased body temperature. Systemic symptoms such as headache, anorexia, malaise are produced due to systemic effects of microbial products.^[5]

The fever patterns are sometimes due to lifecycle of the causative agent as in case of malaria. The cyclic pattern of fever seen in malaria is due to the circulation of the parasite after 48-72 h after the erythrocytic cycle. Periodic release of the parasites accounts for the intermittent nature of the disease.⁶ Recurrent fevers are seen in diseases with partial treatment.^[7]

DIFFERENT FEVER PATTERNS

Fever can be arbitrarily classified based on the height of fever, no. of days fever is present. Clinically it can be classified based on different patterns: intermittent, remittent, continued or sustained.^[8]

Continuous or sustained fever is fever that does not fluctuate more than about 1 °C during 24 h, but does not touch normal body temperature.^[8] In Intermittent fever, fever is present only for several hours during the day.^[8] Temperature is elevated, but falls to normal each day.^[1] Relapsing fever which is a type of intermittent fever, temperature elevations are separated by days or weeks of intervening normal temperature.^[1] Remittent fever is characterised by fever with daily fluctuations exceeding 2 °C but at no time comes to normal body temperature.^[8]

Along with patterns of fever many investigations like complete blood count, C-reactive protein, blood culture, chest and abdominal imaging, urine analysis may indicate the cause of the fever.^[9] General management of fever includes rest and

hydration, lukewarm baths, cold sponging and nutritious diet.^[9]

HOMOEOPATHIC MANAGEMENT

Homoeopathy, a holistic science gives an alternative to modern medicine in comprehensive management of cases of fever. Homoeopathic medicine guides the body's defence mechanism in addressing the root cause of the disease.

Different patterns of fever are not only suggestive of a group of diseases but also help in individualising homoeopathic medicines. Homeopathic medicines for different patterns of fever:

INTERMITTENT FEVER

Rubrics:

1. Complete repertory^[10]
 - Fever, heat; intermittent, malarial
 - Fever, heat; periodical
2. Synthesis^[11]

Fever: intermittent

Medicines:

1. ARSENIC ALBUM

Common Name: White oxide of arsenic(As₂O₃)

Arsenic fever are always violent. Dry and burning heat with intense thirst which is only quenched by drinking small quantities of water at regular intervals. Nausea, loathing of food and sometimes vomiting are present with fever. There is great restlessness and prostration in the patient. Fevers are usually prolonged. Periodicity is well marked in the fever with great exhaustion and restlessness. Fever usually aggravates at night.^[12]

2. NATRUM MUR

Common Name: Table salt

Fever is present with continuous chill, headache and perspiration. Debility is present shortness of breath and cracked tongue. Fever blisters are seen around lips sometimes forming dark scabs. Patient feels better in open air, there is intense thirst previous to during the chill. Chill is usually seen between 9-11 AM, with intense thirst which increases with fever. History of recurrent malaria is also

present.^[12]

3. CINCHONA OFFICINALIS

Common Name: China, Peruvian bark

Cinchona is used since eternity for intermediate fever. Debility from exhausting discharges and loss of vital fluids. History of malaria, intermittent fever with chill seen especially at night and forenoon with marked debility. Thirst is present during heat stage, excessive flatulence with belching and water brash. Patient sweats profusely during sleep. China also helps during convalescence period with weakness and exhaustion caused by malaria.^[12]

4. RHUS TOXICODENDRON

Common Name: Poison ivy

Fever presents with weakness of whole body, bruised and sore sensation in the extremities. There is great restlessness with pain in the extremities which is less during rest. Prostration and trembling are present during fever. Clean and dry tongue with red tip. Patient is chilly as if cold water were poured on him. Fever blisters are seen around the mouth.^[12]

REMITTENT FEVER

RUBRICS:

1. Complete repertory^[10]
 - Fever, heat; remittent
2. Synthesis repertory^[11]

Fever: remittent

Medicines:

1. ARSENIC ALBUM

Common Name: White oxide of arsenic(As₂O₃)

Nightly aggravation of fever is seen. Fever starts with severe chill followed by intense burning heat and dryness of skin following which there is debilitating sweat. During fever there is intense headache with sensation as if the skull would fly to pieces. There is intense thirst which is relieved by drinking small quantities of water. Taste in mouth is very unpleasant with foul looking tongue. Patient grows weaker day by day, losing flesh and

becomes extremely debilitated. With fever there is presence of intense restlessness¹².

2. GELSEMIUM:

Common Name: Yellow Jasmine

The face of gelsemium patient is dusky red with periods of drowsiness indicating intense prostration and sluggishness of circulation. Pulse is slow, full and compressible. Patient becomes dull, sluggish and lethargic. Muscle soreness, great prostration with violent headaches are present. Chill along the spine with thirstlessness. There is immense fear, anxiety about future, fear of being alone¹².

3. BRYONIA ALBA

Common Name: Wild hops

There is intense pain in back and limbs, which is aggravated by touch and motion better by rest. Dullness of sensorium with aversion to noise and mental exertion. Headache, prostration, extreme dryness of throat with increased thirst, copious sour perspiration with extreme chilliness. Tongue is coated white down the centre with red edges. There is bitter taste in mouth. Chill with external coldness and dry cough¹².

4. BELLADONNA

Common Name: Deadly nightshade

Intense headache with restlessness and drowsiness starting from the limbs. Nausea with dry and sticky mouth, sensitiveness to light and noise. Perspiration only on head. Absence of thirst with fever. Throbbing of carotids, dilated pupils, very red and puffed face¹².

CONTINUED FEVER

RUBRICS:

1. Complete repertory^[10]

Fever, heat; continued, typhoid

Fever, heat; septic fevers

2. SYNTHESIS^[11]

Fever; continued fever

Medicines:

1. BRYONIA ALBA

Common Name: Wild hops

There is intense pain in back and limbs, which

is aggravated by touch and motion better by rest. Dullness of sensorium with aversion to noise and mental exertion. Headache, prostration, extreme dryness of throat with increased thirst, copious sour perspiration with extreme chilliness. Tongue is coated white down the centre with red edges. There is bitter taste in mouth. Chill with external coldness and dry cough.^[12]

2. BAPTISIA TINCTORIA

Common Name: Wild Indigo

High fever with extreme weakness, headache and delirium. Tongue is heavily coated with offensive breath and intestinal discomfort. Chill is present with soreness of whole body. All the secretions of the body are offensive¹².

3. RHUS TOXICODENDRON

Common Name: Poison ivy

Fever presents with weakness of whole body, bruised and sore sensation in the extremities. There is great restlessness with pain in the extremities which is less during rest. Prostration and trembling are present during fever. Clean and dry tongue with red tip. Patient is chilly as if cold water were poured on him. Fever blisters are seen around the mouth¹².

4. ARSENIC ALBUM

Common Name: White oxide of arsenic(As₂O₃)

Arsenic fever are always violent. Dry and burning heat with intense thirst which is only quenched by drinking small quantities of water at regular intervals. Nausea, loathing of food and sometimes vomiting are present with fever. There is great restlessness and prostration in the patient. Fevers are usually prolonged. Periodicity is well marked in the fever with great exhaustion and restlessness. Fever usually aggravates at night¹².

CONCLUSION

In clinical practice above mentioned patterns of fever are difficult to find due to many confounding factors which change the course of the fever. Extensive use of antipyretics, occurrence of two or more infectious diseases may contribute in obscuring the said

trajectory of fever.^[13-14] Albeit, typical fever patterns may help in giving some diagnostic clues for infectious disease. They also help in differentiating with other infectious disease, thus guiding the physician to probable investigations to confirm the diagnosis. In low resource settings, fever patterns may save the cost of the investigations and also guide in early interventions for better prognosis.^[14] Along with the diagnostic clues, fever patterns may throw light on a set of medicines leading the way for the homoeopathic physician.

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