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Leucorrhoea and Homoeopathy

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Abstract

Vaginal discharge is the commonest reproductive tract infection among rural women in many community-based studies in India. Recent evidence shows that the association between vaginal discharge and reproductive tract infection is weak. Psychosocial factors also contribute to vaginal discharge. So, the problem of vaginal discharge can be best understood not only in the biomedical perspective but also in the socio-cultural perspective. Proper understanding of this problem helps in initiating appropriate medical education programmes and framing health policies. This common problem may occur due to unhygienic conditions, infection of the genital tract, or impaired immune function. Unfortunately, most women are highly embarrassed by this problem. Well, women are not only embarrassed in front of others because of this, but most of them also avoid discussing the problem with their medical health care providers, which is why the treatment for vaginal discharge caused by leucorrhoea could be a bit of a challenge.

Keywords: Gynecological problem, Leucorrhoea, Reproductive health, Vaginal discharge, Homoeopathy.

Introduction

Leucorrhoea is strictly defined as an excessive normal vaginal discharge. The symptom of excessive discharge is a subjective one with individual variation, while to declare it to be normal and not an infective one, requires clinical and laboratory investigations. The term leucorrhoea should fulfil the following criteria:

- The excess secretion is evident from persistent vulval moistness or staining of the undergarments (brownish yellow on drying) or need to wear a vulval pad.
- It is nonpurulent and nonoffensive.
- It is nonirritant and never causes pruritus^[1].

Leucorrhoea is a medical condition where women experience thick whitish or yellowish colour discharge from the vagina which is mainly experienced during puberty, when sexual organs are developing in a woman. It is a frequent gynecological complaint of women that accounts for more than 25% patient's visits to the gynecologists^[2].

It is generally defined as white fluid discharged from female genital. Sometime it flows as liquid and sometime it is sticky and thick. Its property changes according to the age of the women or when they travel too much. Vaginal discharges up to a certain extent are normal and healthy as they flush out the dead cells of reproductive organs and other toxic organisms. In healthy women discharge is whitish in colour.

The abnormal vaginal discharge may be whitish, yellowish, reddish and blackish in colour. If it is thick, sticky, white and inflammatory, medical check-up is required. With symptoms perceivable and discharge abnormal, if there is profuse and unstoppable discharge which requires pad or it is not white but grey-white, yellow, green, brown or rust-like in colour and causes itching, it is a critical condition which necessitates serious treatment^[3].

Every woman has periodically some normal vaginal discharges, which maintaining chemical balance and the flexibility of vaginal muscles, serve as normal defensive system for vagina. If such discharges exceed normalcy and become white or yellow thick liquid with a foul smell, it is called "Leucorrhoea" that may be a sign of infection, cancer or may be due to some other reasons. This abnormal vaginal discharge may be whitish, yellowish, reddish and blackish in colour.

In Sanskrit language it is called shuwetapradra, a combination of two words. Shuweta means white and pradra means discharge. This discharge is often caused by inflammation or infection within the vagina or cervix^[4].

Its major cause is hormonal imbalance especially of oestrogen. It is primary female sex hormone which is responsible for the regulation and development of the female reproductive

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system and secondary sex characteristics. It also controls various body functions of a female. Sometime oestrogen imbalance in female body may lead to sterility.

Leucorrhoea creates no problem in conception but its causes do.

Etiology -

Other causative factors of the disease are:

- ✓ Spread of infection from urinary tract
- ✓ Inflammation of uterus
- ✓ Infections from bacteria, fungi or parasites – protozoa.
- ✓ Early/ young age pregnancy
- ✓ Injuries to the vagina, the womb or the cervix
- ✓ Allergy or contact dermatitis
- ✓ Pelvic inflammatory disease
- ✓ Contraceptives used by women
- ✓ Lack of cleanliness or poor hygienic measures especially during menses.
- ✓ Gonorrhoea
- ✓ Gout
- ✓ Syphilis
- ✓ Displacement of uterus
- ✓ Arthritis
- ✓ Typhoid
- ✓ Diabetes and anaemia can provoke infections due to weakened immunity
- ✓ Mental anxiety or sexual frustration
- ✓ **Infection through mildew:** Any fungus like yeast infects reproductive organs and causes Leucorrhoea. If it is because of fungus, discharge will be thick white with itching in vagina. This kind of discharge is called vaginal mildew.
- ✓ **Some sexually transmittable diseases cause Leucorrhoea.** One of them is Trichomoniasis which makes discharge greenish or yellow.
- ✓ **Dirty toilet also causes Leucorrhoea.** Common usage of tools pertaining to toilet and particularly public toilet infects female sexual organs and finally leads to Leucorrhoea. The disease seen in women who excessively use medicine for sexual organ.
- ✓ **Problems related to last narrow part of womb:** blister or swelling at the head of womb also causes Leucorrhoea. In that case discharge is more profuse than during sexual intercourse. It is grey in colour and looks like coagulated blood.
- ✓ **Inflammation in below abdomen:** Infection in below abdomen which contains sexual and reproductive organs may cause inflammation leading to Leucorrhoea.
- ✓ **Various illnesses:** women suffering from various diseases like tuberculosis and anaemia get their discharge increased to greater extent. The problem is in women who have weak immune system or take diet lacking nutritive properties.
- ✓ **Stress or depression:** to some level there are psychological factors causing the disease. Women too much under pressure or depressed may be afflicted with the disease. Sometime come to clinic too frightened as they say that their bones are decaying^{[3][15]}.

Pathophysiology

The physiologic basis involved in normal vaginal secretion is dependent on the endogenous estrogen level. With the rising estrogen level, there is abundant secretory activity of

the endocervical glands and the superficial vaginal epithelium becomes rich in glycogen.

The mucoid secretion from the cervical glands is normally small in amount. The carbohydrate radical of the glycoprotein mucin is split off and fermented into lactic acid. If, however, the mucus is secreted in excess, it pours out at the vulva.

The excessive secretion is due to:

1. Physiologic excess
2. Cervical cause (cervical leucorrhoea)
3. Vaginal cause (vaginal leucorrhoea)

1- Physiologic excess: The normal secretion is expected to increase in conditions when the estrogen levels become high. Such conditions are:

During puberty - Increased levels of endogenous estrogen lead to marked overgrowth of the endocervical epithelium which may encroach onto the ectocervix producing congenital ectopy (erosion) → increased secretion.

During menstrual cycle

- a. Around ovulation—Peak rise of estrogen → increase in secretory activity of the cervical glands.
- b. Premenstrual pelvic congestion and increased mucus secretion from the hypertrophied endometrial glands.

Pregnancy - There is hyperestrinism with increased vascularity. This leads to increased vaginal transudate and cervical gland secretion.

During sexual excitement, when there is abundant secretion from the Bartholin's glands.

2 - Cervical cause: Non-infective cervical lesion may produce excessive secretion, which pours out at the vulva. Such lesions are—cervical ectopy, chronic cervicitis, mucous polyp and ectropion (cervical glands are exposed to the vagina).

3 - Vaginal cause: Increased vaginal transudation occurs in conditions associated with increased pelvic congestion. The conditions are uterine prolapse, acquired retroverted uterus, chronic pelvic inflammation, 'pill' use and vaginal adenosis. Ill health is one of the important causes of excessive discharge. It produces excess exfoliation of the superficial cells^[1].

Symptoms

Main symptoms of the disease are excessive vaginal discharge, pain in the thighs and calf muscles and burning micturition etc. The vaginal discharge colour may be whitish, yellowish, reddish and blackish. The discharge may be accompanied with foul smelling and itchy sensation or a pain at the infected area.

Others associated symptoms of the disease with excessive vaginal discharge are^{[3][5][15]},

- Pain & heaviness in lower abdomen
- Constipation
- Anaemia
- Local soreness
- Lumbago
- Malaise

- Breathlessness
- Headache and Giddiness
- Indigestion
- Paleness
- Anorexia
- Pain in menstruation
- General weakness
- Polyuria
- Pruritus

Diagnosis of Leucorrhoea

Patients usually complain for abnormal discharge from vaginal with one or more other associated symptoms of the disease mentioned above. Discharge looks white or creamy in colour, sometimes it looks reddish, blackish or yellowish. General weakness may reveal the ill health of the patient, which may be due to the leucorrhoea. Peevishness occurs in the behaviour of the patient and often it may risk to heart attack. The discharge is subjected to microscopic examination for detection of pus cells to exclude the infective nature of the disease. If pus cells are not detected then it is case of leucorrhoea but if pus cell is detected then further investigations are carried out to identify the organism in discharge and rule out the actual disease [1][3][5][6][7][8][15].

History

- ❖ Duration of the complaint.
- ❖ Fungus infection
- ❖ Excessive intercourse
- ❖ About the discharge; character, modality etc.

Special examinations

- Smears from urethra, vagina and cervix.
- Blood examination.
- Urine examination.
- Blood pressure examination.
- Biopsy: for evidence of malignancy.

Complexities Brought About By Leucorrhoea

It is a minor disease. It can easily be controlled within a few days, if treated at early stage with immediate consultation by qualified physician. Self-medication must be strictly avoided. There are many creams and pills available in market. None of them should be used unless prescribed by a gynaecologist. Some women are allergic to some medicines which may infect more and things got worse, so prevention is better by avoiding self-medication than to land in trouble. [3][5]

Transmission of Leucorrhoea

Leucorrhoea transmits through mildew like yeast and easily transmits from woman to woman. Intermixing of the clothes of affected woman with the clothes of healthy woman may affect the later. Therefore, undergarments should be washed carefully using any good detergent which could cleanse spots and fungus. It is also caused by unprotected sex. Infected reproductive organ of a person may infect the female reproductive organ and cause the disease [3][5].

Principles of Management

- ✚ If leucorrhoea is due to the weakness of nutritive power then Apple should be given. Easily digestible foods and beverages increase the nutritive power of uterus.

- ✚ If leucorrhoea is caused by metritis then the same treatment should be prescribed as the treatment for metritis.
- ✚ In the presence of general weakness the general body tonics must be given.
- ✚ In the condition of Anaemia, iron compound should be given.
- ✚ In the treatment of the disease, digestion should be maintained and constipation in patients should be removed.
- ✚ Maintain and strengthen all vital organs of body to improve the general health of the patient.
- ✚ Sympathetic attitude must be kept towards the patient and the anxiety state should be removed if the patient is anxious.
- ✚ Loose fitting undergarments preferably cotton made should be used by the patients to keep the area aerated.
- ✚ Local hygiene is to be taken care of and sanitation should be maintained always [3][5][8].

Safeguarding against Leucorrhoea

There are many preventive measures which prevent leucorrhoea. A few of them are as under:

- ❖ Fresh curds must become an integral part of the diet because it not only helps in easy digestion of food but also contain lactic acid, which can reduce the discharge.
- ❖ Clean the innerwear and yourself with a good quality detergent which has bactericidal and fungicidal properties.
- ❖ Immediately change the clothes including undergarments, if clothes get wet in the rain or due to any other reason.
- ❖ Inner wear made of Nylon material should be avoided in summer because as it may retain sweat in the genital area. Cotton is best choice for undergarments.
- ❖ Do not unnecessarily use any cosmetics like powders or perfumes in the genital area. They should be strictly avoided.
- ❖ Go on a walk or jog early morning to make the body stress-free and also to increase its resistance to diseases
- ❖ Pill users should stop the pill temporarily if the symptoms is very much annoying.
- ❖ Before going physical with your partner make sure he is free from all kinds of infections and habituate yourself to wash your organ clean after meeting thus keep away many diseases.
- ❖ Cleanliness of reproductive organs is very important. Wash the genitals carefully during every bath and do not let moisture retain in the genitals area after the bath. Let the water flow on anus and vulva in plenty as to wash them clean. Also wash vagina clean after urinating.
- ❖ Self-medication should be avoided because some women are allergic to certain kinds of medicines and use of such medicine may cause further infections and will complicate the issue.
- ❖ Drink plenty of water to flush out the toxic substances from the body.
- ❖ All sugary foods such as pastries, sweets, custards, ice-creams and puddings must be avoided if there is profuse discharge.
- ❖ Mushrooms must be avoided in diet as they are fungi themselves.
- ❖ Hot and spicy foods should be reduced to the least in

diet.

- ❖ Avoid the intake of alcohol.
- ❖ Stress buster exercises and morning walk should be made routine; because when body is stress free, immunity will receive a boost against illnesses ^{[5][7][8]}.

Homemade Remedies for Leucorrhoea

- ✓ Soak some coriander seeds in water overnight and drink the water, after straining it, on an empty stomach in the morning.
- ✓ Clean the vaginal area with freshly squeezed lemon juice and water
- ✓ Consume lady finger, preferably lightly steamed or in the raw form
- ✓ Eat one or two ripe bananas daily
- ✓ Drink one glass of fresh cranberry juice, preferably without any sugar, once a day
- ✓ Before using any of the home remedies for leucorrhoea mentioned above, it is absolutely essential for women to consult a doctor. ^{[3][5]}

Anti- Leucorrhoea Diet

- ✚ If discharge is profuse, sugar should be avoided. Sugar means all sweet items, say pastry, custard, ice-cream pudding etc.
- ✚ Mushroom should be avoided as they are also a type of mildew.
- ✚ A little modification in diet of the patient also helps to prevent leucorrhoea. Modification means excluding some bad/ unhealthy ingredients from diet and including some healthy ones. Following tips are helpful for anyone suffering from leucorrhoea.
- ✚ Hot and spicy edibles create problems; therefore, should be reduced to the least in diet ^{[3][5]}.

Homeopathy and Leucorrhoea

Homeopathy can be proved an effective method of treatment in leucorrhoea as it emphasizes not only treating signs and symptoms but also treating the patient as a whole. It not only manages leucorrhoea but also improves other functions. A homoeopathic physician considers the man as a whole. He considers the life as a trinity of body, mind and soul. An understanding of these helps physician to understand mental state more deeply.

Homeopathy is a system of therapeutics based on law of similars. "Like cures like" 'Similia Similibus Curentur'. It is a universal law, where patient is prescribed a similimum on the basis of 'Totality of Symptoms'. The disease is a reaction of the patient to unfavorable environment factors and that this reaction manifests through signs and symptoms the patterns of this reaction and the essence of these sign and symptoms gives totality of symptoms.

The following Homoeopathic medicine may be useful in treatment of leucorrhoea:

Alumina

- ❖ Leucorrhoea in chlorotic girls which is transparent and yellow in colour.
- ❖ Very profuse and ropy
- ❖ Greatly exhausting, as it is very rich in albumen.
- ❖ It occurs chiefly in the daytime
- ❖ The great profuseness is its characteristic.
- ❖ Very bad constipation. Patient has to strain much even for soft stool ^{[6][9][10][12]}.

Arsenicum Album

- ❖ Leucorrhoea acrid, thin, offensive causes burning to the parts.
- ❖ Burning pain as red hot iron.
- ❖ Stitching pains in pelvis extending to thigh.
- ❖ All complaints worse on least exertion.
- ❖ Patient exhausted both mentally and physically.
- ❖ Restlessness cannot remain in same position or at same place.
- ❖ Thirst for large quantity at frequent intervals. ^{[6][9][10][12]}

Borax

- ❖ Clear, copious and albuminous leucorrhoea.
- ❖ Leucorrhoea with sensation as warm water is flowing.
- ❖ Leucorrhoea midway between menses with great nervousness.
- ❖ White as starch, perfectly bland without pain.
- ❖ Menses too profuse, too soon with nausea. ^{[6][9][10]}

Caulophyllum Thalictroides

- ❖ Leucorrhoea in little girls which is very profuse and weakness the child very much. ^[14]

Calcarea Carbonica

- ❖ Indicated by its general symptoms and these are always the more important in this affection. More prominent of these are morning hunger, acidity of the stomach, cold and damp feet.
- ❖ It corresponds especially to scrofulous persons with enlarged cervical glands.
- ❖ The leucorrhoea is profuse, milky, persistent or yellow and accompanied by itching and burning.
- ❖ It suits leucorrhoea in young girls often recurring before puberty.
- ❖ Leucorrhoea before menses or in recurring attacks between the menses.
- ❖ Menses profuse and long lasting.
- ❖ Coldness or hands and feet with profuse cold sweat ^{[6][9][14]}.

Conium Maculatum

- ❖ Induration of the os and cervix; acrid leucorrhoea; vagina excoriated.
- ❖ "Conium is a valuable special narcotic to the genital organs when we have uterine colic, connected with leucorrhoeal flow; menstrual tympanitis; aching pains in the hypogastrium, like menstrual colic."-R. Ludlam, M. D.
- ❖ Sexual organs, female - Burning, acrid, pungent leucorrhoea.
- ❖ "Prolapsus uteri, complicated with induration, ulceration, and profuse excoriating leucorrhoea."
- ❖ Eruptions on the vulva, with much itching from acid leucorrhoea ^[13].

Calcaria Phosphorica

- ❖ A fine remedy in the scrofulous diathesis; it has a profuse milky bland leucorrhoea ^{[9][11][14]}.

Helonias Dioica

- ❖ For profuse, yellow, thick leucorrhoea with some irritation and itching, in anaemic sallow patients with much prostration and general debility, worse from slight colds and excretion, it is most useful remedy. ^{[14][9]}

Hydrastis Canadensis

- ❖ Tenacious, thick, ropy leucorrhoea with erosion of the cervix; a mucous leucorrhoea which is profuse and debilitating corresponds to Hydrastis^{[14][9]}.

Kalium Bichromicum

- ❖ A yellow, ropy, stringy leucorrhoea.
- ❖ It is suitable to fat, light haired persons^{[6][9]}.

Kreasotum

- ❖ Profuse watery, sometimes a yellowish leucorrhoea.
- ❖ Acridity is marked; it causes excoriating of the parts which come in contact with it and causes soreness and smarting and red spots and itching on the vulva.
- ❖ Leucorrhoea with great debility.^{[6][9]}

Lilium Tigrinum

- ❖ An excoriating, watery, yellowish or yellowish brown leucorrhoea, which is profuse and is accompanied by a depression of spirits and bearing down in pelvic region.^[14]

Magnesium Muriaticum

- ❖ Leucorrhoea after every stool or following uterine spasms.
- ❖ Leucorrhoea two weeks after menses
- ❖ Cramp-like pains in abdomen, esp. in evening, and sometimes followed by leucorrhoea.
- ❖ Cramps in uterus, sometimes with pains extending to thighs, and leucorrhoea.
- ❖ Leucorrhoea, esp. during movement, or preceded by cramps in abdomen.
- ❖ Leucorrhoea immediately after stool.^[11]

Mercurius

- ❖ Acrid excoriating leucorrhoea smarting and burning, swelling of external genital organs.
- ❖ Purulent greenish yellow leucorrhoea worse at night; heat, tenderness and pain involving nabothian glands, form good indication for Mercurius.
- ❖ Subjects with yellow and thick leucorrhoea also indicate the remedy.^[6]

Natrium Muriaticum

- ❖ Much bearing down and much leucorrhoea.
- ❖ Leucorrhoea, with headache, disposition to diarrhoea, colic, and mucous evacuations.
- ❖ Acrid (greenish) leucorrhoea (increased discharge when walking), with yellow colour of face.
- ❖ The leucorrhoea is white and thick.
- ❖ The leucorrhoea, which is at first white, turns green.
- ❖ It takes years to establish health in a typical chlorosis; the cut finger bleeds only water; the menstrual flow is only a leucorrhoea; there is pernicious anaemia.^{[12][13]}

Nitricum Acidum

- ❖ Flesh-colored or greenish leucorrhoea.
- ❖ "Cherry-brown, and fetid leucorrhoea."
- ❖ "Leucorrhoea where a syphilitic taint is the basis of the affection."
- ❖ Leucorrhoea, consisting of mucus, which can be drawn out.
- ❖ The inguinal glands are sympathetically affected with the leucorrhoea.

- ❖ Offensive leucorrhoea, offensive catarrh, and breath; foetid foot sweat.
- ❖ Excoriation of the parts from leucorrhoea and menstrual discharges.
- ❖ Thin, bloody, excoriating leucorrhoea at all times or at any time.^{[12][15]}

Pulsatilla

- ❖ Milky leucorrhoea which becomes watery, acrid from being retained in the vagina.
- ❖ Thick, creamy, white leucorrhoea sometimes replacing menses.
- ❖ Disposition to lie down and dullness very marked.
- ❖ Mild yielding female with irritability due to disease.
- ❖ Desire for fatty rich food which aggravate.
- ❖ Patient feels better when telling her complaints.^{[6][9][10][13]}

Sabina

- ❖ Chronic catarrh of vagina with granulations, copious leucorrhoea.:
- ❖ Bloody leucorrhoea.
- ❖ Suppressed catamenia with very offensive-smelling leucorrhoea
- ❖ Leucorrhoea, itching, yellowish, fetid, and thick, like starch.^[12]

Sepia

- ❖ Leucorrhoea yellowish green color, somewhat offensive and often excoriating. sepia homeopathy medicine for leucorrhoea
- ❖ It is milky, worse before menses.
- ❖ Pain in abdomen and itching in vagina.
- ❖ The patient has a sallow, pimply face, and it is most suitable to those of dark complexion who are feeble and debilitated and who have a sensation of emptiness at the pit of the stomach.
- ❖ Mentally patient is very anxious about family and her children. Or may be indifferent to them.
- ❖ Leucorrhoea with backache.^{[6][9][10]}

Silicea Terra

- ❖ Leucorrhoea, which flows when urinating, or after the menses.
- ❖ Leucorrhoea, like milk, flowing at intervals, and preceded by gripings in umbilical region.
- ❖ Acrid, corrosive leucorrhoea.
- ❖ "Constipation before and during the menses, of hard lumps which remain long in the rectum, as if it had no power to expel them." [With corrosive watery leucorrhoea.]
- ❖ Acrid, profuse leucorrhoea, with itching of the vulva.^{[11][13]}

Sulphur

- ❖ Complaints that are always relapsing (menses, leucorrhoea, and c.); patient seems to get almost well when the disease returns again and again.
- ❖ Agg. Before, during, and after menses (headache; leucorrhoea).
- ❖ Before menses headache, itching in the parts; spasmodic colic; inquietude; cough; toothache; pyrosis; epistaxis; leucorrhoea, and asthmatic sufferings.
- ❖ Leucorrhoea sometimes corrosive; gnawing and

yellowish, preceded by colic.

- ❖ Cancer of uterus; offensive, corrosive, ichorous leucorrhoea; sensation of heat in crown of head; coldness of feet; flushes of heat pass off in a perspiration with faintness; weak at pit of stomach 11 a.m. to 12; violent burning in vagina, with painful soreness during coitus.^[11]

Conclusion

Leucorrhoea is the most common and affecting a major population of all age group. It is affecting daily routine and decreasing the Quality of Life. Homoeopathy has wonderful role in treatment of leucorrhoea in compare to other conventional treatment. Homeopathy treats the patient as a whole, taking note of causative factors, sign and symptoms and framing a totality of symptoms for the individualization purpose, which in turn helps in selection of similimum. Homoeopathy offers a complete, gentle and permanent cure in case of leucorrhoea.

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