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Belladonna: A homoeopathic remedy

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Abstract

Belladonna common name is deadly nightshade. It is widely used in homoeopathic system of medicine. Its main indications are central nerves system, mind and respiratory system. It has a marked action on the vascular system, skin and glands. It is always associated with hot, red skin, flushed face, glaring eyes, throbbing carotids, excited mental state, hyperaesthesia of all senses, delirium, restless sleep, convulsive movements, dryness of mouth and throat with aversion to water. Moreover it is also proven as anti-inflammatory. However, more research studies are required for proven its efficacy on scientific ground.

Keywords: *Belladonna*, homoeopathic remedy

Introduction

Belladonna common name is deadly nightshade. It belongs to solanaceae family. It is native to Europe, North Africa and Western Asia. Its distribution extends from Great Britain in the west to western Ukraine and the Iranian province of Gilan in the east. It is also naturalised and introduced in some parts of Canada and the United States. It has a long history of use as a medicine, cosmetic and poison^[1,2]. Before the middle ages, it was used as an anaesthetic for surgery: the ancient romans used it as a poison (the wife of Emperor Augustus and the wife of Claudius both were rumoured to have used it for murder): and predating this, it was used to make poison tipped arrows. The genus name atropa comes from atropos, one of the three fates in Greek mythology, who cut the thread of life after her sisters had spun and measured it; and the name "belladonna" is derived from Italian and means 'beautiful woman' because the herb was used in eye drops by women to dilate the pupils of the eyes to make them appear seductive. Belladonna is a branching herbaceous perennial rhizomatous hemicyptophyte, often growing as a subshrub from a fleshy root stock, plants grow to 2 m (6.6 ft), tall with ovate leaves 18 cm (7.1 in) long. The bell shaped flowers are dull purple with green tinges and faintly scented. The fruits are berries, which are green, ripening to a shiny black and approximately 1.5 cm in diameter³⁻⁵. The berries are sweet and are consumed by animals that disperse the seeds in their droppings, even though they contain berries are sweet and are consumed by animals that disperse the seeds in their droppings, even though they contain toxin alkaloids. There is a pale yellow flowering form called belladonna var. lutea with pale yellow fruit. Belladonna is native to temperate southern, central and eastern euope. In Britain it is native only on calcareous soils, on disturbed ground, field margins, hedgerows and open woodland. More widespread as an alien, it is often a relic of cultivation as a medicinal herb. Seed is spread mainly by birds. It is naturalized in parts of North America, where it is often found in shady, moist locations with limestonerich soils. It is considered a weed species in parts of the world. Where it colonizes areas with disturbed soils. The name atropa belladonna was published by Linnacus in species plantarum in 1753^[6-8].

Generalities

Belladonna acts up on nerve centers producing twitching, convulsions and pain. its action up on the brain causes furious excitement and perversion of special senses. Circulation in blood vessels and capillaries becomes active causing congestion, throbbing and dilation of arteries. Mucous membranes become dry. Its effects are sudden and violent. Burning heat, bright redness and dryness are very marked. Hot body, part hot and discharges are hot in nature. Redness occurs in steaks. Severe neuralgic pain that comes and goes suddenly. Fullness, congestion esp. to head swelling are other characteristic features. Pains are throbbing, sharp, cutting, shooting or clawing of maddening severity, coming and going in repeated attacks. All belladonna symptoms will occur right side. Constrictions occurs in parts of the body like

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throat, vagina etc., or in whole body. Sensitive to light, noise, jarring. Convulsions commence in the arm. Spasms are followed by prolonged unconsciousness. Useful in air sickness. Its influence is felt more in intelligent and plethoric person, who are jovial and entertaining when well, but violent when a great children's remedy sick, therefore. All symptoms are worse by heat of sun. Drafts – on head, haircut, washing head. After taking cold, light, noise, jarring, checked sweat, touch, pressure, motion, hanging down affected part, afternoon, lying down, looking at shining objects or running water. All symptoms of belladonna better by light covering, bending backward, semi erect, rest in bed, standing. Leaning head against something, bending or turning the affected part [9].

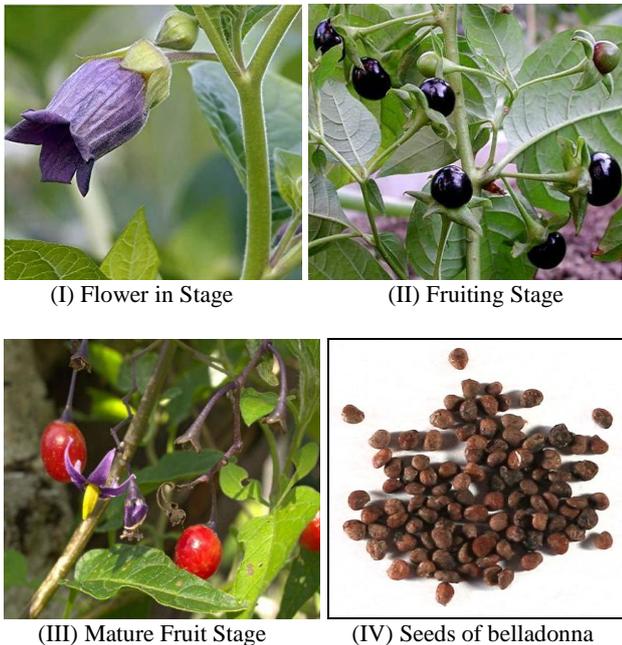


Fig 1: Different Stages of Belladonna

Mind symptoms

Belladonna patient lives in a world of his own, engrossed by specters and visions and oblivious to surrounding realities. While the retina is insensible to actual objects, a host of visual hallucinations throng about him and come to him from within. He is acutely alive and crazed by a flood of subjective visual impressions and fantastic illusions, hallucinations, sees monsters, hideous faces, delirium, frightful images, furious, rages, bites strikes, desire to escape, loss of consciousness, disinclined to talk, perversity with tears, changeableness. Acuteness of all senses. Women and children with light hair and blue eyes, fine complexion, delicate skin, sensitive, nervous, threatened with convulsions. Great liability to take cold. Congestion, throbbing and dilation of arteries. Discharges are very hot and scanty.



Fig 2: Loss of consciousness & Hallucinations of belladonna

Head symptoms:

Vertigo with falling to left side or backwards. Sensitive to least contact. Much throbbing and heat. Palpitation reverberating in head with labored breathing. Pain, fullness, especially in forehead, also occiput and temples. Headache from suppressed catarrhal flow. Sudden outcries. Pain worse by light, noise, jar, lying down and in afternoon. Head symptoms better by pressure and semi erect posture. Boring of head in to pillow, drawn back ward and rolls from side to side.

Other symptoms

Face of the belladonna patient is red, bluish red, hot, swollen, shining, convulsive motion of muscles of face. Swelling of upper lip. Facial neuralgia with twitching muscles and flushed face. Eyes of the belladonna patient is throbbing deep in eyes on lying down. Pupils dilated. Eyes feel swollen and protruding, staring, brilliant. Sensation as if eyes were half closed. Eyelids swollen, funds congested. Ears complaints of the patients are tearing pain in middle and external ear, humming noise, membrane tympani bulges and injected, parotid gland swollen, sensitive to loud tones, herring very acute, otitis media, pain causes delirium. Childrens cries out in sleep, throbbing and beating pain deep in ear, synchronous with hear beta. Hematoma auris. Nose complaints of the patients red, swollen, imaginary odours, odour of tobacco, intolerable, bleeding from nose with flushed face. Face complaints are fiery, red, turgid and hot, becomes pale and red alternately, semilateral swelling of the face. Spasmodic distortion of mouth. Convulsive motions of muscles of face, facial neuralgia with twitching of muscles and flushed face. Lower jaw as if drawn backwards.



Fig 3: Tonsillitis in Belladonna

Throat complaints are tonsils enlarged, dry and hot, symptoms aggravated by right side. Urging to swallow with choking. Throat feels constricted. Swallowing difficult, drinks in sips, must take a drink to swallow solid food, when swallowing bends the head forward and lifts up knees, clutches at during epilepsy. Stomach complaints are desire for lemonade or lemons (which agree), distaste for meat, acids, coffee, milk, beer. Vomits everything with paleness and weakness. Great thirst for cold water. Dread of drinking. Spasmodic hiccough with sweat and convulsions. Pain in stomach extending to shoulder and throat worst by pressure.

Abdomen complaints are distension and hot. Transverse colon protrudes like a pad. Tender and swollen, pain as if clutched by a hand, worse by jar pressure. Cutting pain across, stitches I left side of abdomen when coughing, sneezing or touching it. Extreme sensitiveness to touch and bed clothes etc., stools of the patients are thing, green, dysenteric in lumps like chalk. Shuddering during stool,

stinging pain rectum, spasmodic stricture, piles more sensitive with backache, prolapsusani. Urine complaints are retention of urine, acute urinary infection, Sensation of motion I bladder as of a worm. Urine scanty with tenesmus dark and turbid loaded with phosphates. Vesical region sensitive, incontinence, continuous dropping, frequent and profuse urination. Haematuria where no pathological condition can be found. Prostatic hypertrophy. Belladonna also indicated in male testicles hard, drawn up, inflamed, nocturnal sweat of genitals, flow of prostatic fluid, desire diminished.

Female complaints of belladonna patients are sensitive forcing downwards, as if all the viscera would protrude at genitals. Dryness and heat of vagina, dragging around loins, pain in sacrum. Menses increased, bright red, too early and too profuse. Haemorrhage hot. Cutting pain from hip to hip. Tumors of breasts, pain worse lying down, badly smelling haemorrhages, hot gushes of blood. Diminished lochia ^[10]

Respiratory symptoms

Drying in nose, fauces, larynx and trachea is tickling, dry cough. Symptoms worst at night. Larynx feels sore. Cheyne stokes respiration. Hoarse, loss of voice, barking cough, whooping cough with pain in stomach before attack. Cough with pain in left hip. Cough with expectoration of blood. Larynx very painful, feels as if a foreign body were in it with cough. High, piping voice. Moaning at every breath.

Fever of belladonna patient

High feverish state with comparative absence of toxemia, burning, pungent, steaming, heat, feet icy cold, superficial blood vessels, distended, perspiration dry only on head, no thirst with fever. Sleep of the patient is restless, crying out, gritting of teeth, screams out in sleep, sleeplessness with drowsiness. Starting when closing the eyes or during sleep, sleep with hands under head ^[11]

Modalities

Aggravation

Heat of sun, sweat, touch, motion, lying down, afternoon, running water.

Amelioration

Light covering, bending backward, rest in bed, bending or turning the affected part.

Discussion

Belladonna in homoeopathy system of medicine is used for various kinds of ailments, especially central nervous system, fever, female complaints and male complaints. The basic indication in any ailments is heat, redness, throbbing and burning. Belladonna is a good analgesic ^[12] and anti-inflammatory when it is prescribed on totality of symptoms. A study showed that great relief in orthodontic separator pain ^[13].

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