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Belly sweetbread: A homeopathic purview

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Abstract

The Pancreas was generally ignored both as an organ of physiological importance and as a seat of disease. Older Physicians and pathologists reported different pancreatic disorders after dissecting human cadavers. Porcine pancreatic transplants were attempted in Europe, as pigs were considered to be good candidates for xenotransplants. A survey on the recent medical literature signifies a steady rise in pancreatic transplants. Persons with their pancreas in a morbid state, exhibit a variety of emotions that will vary according to the type of pathology. Johann Gottfried Rademacher, the modern father of organopathy, although a contemporary to Hahnemann, adopted the doctrines of Paracelsus and introduced many specific remedies into Homoeopathic practice. The extensive works of O A Julian are perceived from his books 'Materia Medica of new Homoeopathic remedies' and 'Materia medica of Nosodes with Repertory'. An insight into the Homoeopathic remedies that correspond to the treatment of pancreatic diseases is compiled with reference from the available Homoeopathic literature. This attempt may be a steppingstone for formulating a well-designed research protocol in place of conventional surgical management or the rising pancreatic transplants.

Keywords: Pancreas, Iris versicolor, organopathy, homeopathy, pancreatinum, alloxanum, carica papaya

1. Introduction

Belly sweetbread or Gutbread is the culinary name given for pancreas ^[1]. Herophilus, a Greek physician, systematically performed scientific dissections and identified pancreas in human cadavers ^[2, 3]. The pancreas was generally ignored both as an organ of physiological importance and as a seat of disease ^[3]. Oskar Minkowski, in a landmark study on diabetes at the University of Strasbourg in 1889, induced diabetes in dogs by removing their pancreas ^[4]. Chiari in 1896, postulated pancreatic auto-digestion as the underlying pathophysiological mechanism in the development of pancreatitis ^[5]. Giovan Battista Morgagni, an Italian scientist, who is called the father of modern anatomical pathology, claimed to have traced several cases of carcinoma of the pancreas ^[6].

The treatment that emerged at that point of time to allay the manifestations of these pancreatic disorders included many unsuccessful operations and experimental procedures but wasn't adequate enough to extricate oneself from the disease. In the past, porcine pancreatic transplants were attempted in Europe, as pigs were considered to be good candidates for xenotransplants because the pigs show similitude in anatomy and physiology with humans. A survey on the recent medical literature reports a steady rise in pancreatic transplants ^[7, 8]. With the advent of technology in medicine, a man-made device called 'Artificial Pancreas' is engineered to regulate blood glucose by releasing insulin into the blood, simulating human pancreas whenever there's a rise in sugar levels ^[9].

2. Pancreas & emotions

The basis of Homeopathic prescriptions includes the type of emotions expressed in an individual. From the perspective of East Asian medicine, every organ in the body is related to a particular kind of emotion ^[10]. Persons with their pancreas in a morbid state, exhibit a variety of emotions that will vary according to the type of pathology. Individuals suffering from Cancer of the pancreas have a constant feeling that unjust decisions were made against him by breaking the rules. The anger that is repressed within them will instigate an abnormal growth in the organ. Hopelessness, depression, disappointment, and feelings of despair may produce a disturbance in the sugar metabolism leading to pancreatic diabetes. Inflammatory conditions of the pancreas both acute and chronic are seen in people who are bored with their life and indulge in drinking ^[11].

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3. Homeopathic standpoint

The quantum of Homeopathic medicines mentioned in the literature for treating the diseases of the pancreas is quite limited. Johann Gottfried Rademacher, the modern father of organopathy, although a contemporary to Hahnemann, adopted the doctrines of Paracelsus and introduced many specific remedies into Homeopathic practice. Some of the relevant remedies in line with the symptoms, pathology or empirical practice will be discussed below.

Hughes's Manual of Pharmacodynamics & Burt's Physiological Materia Medica cites Iodine as the foremost remedy principally used to treat the diseases of the pancreas in the organology of Rademacher. Iodine seems to increase the secretions of the pancreas and stomach. The canine hunger and the epigastric pain after eating food indicates its action over both the endocrine and the exocrine part of the pancreas.

Iris Versicolor is a chief remedy of clinical importance. Burt W H in his Characteristics Materia Medica claims that no remedy has the most prominent and specific action on the pancreas other than Iris. The tincture of the medicine was administered in several cats and the organs were examined under a microscope. He found intense congestion of the minute vessels supplying the pancreas and even rupture of the gland, along with extravasation of blood. This medicine also has a potential action on the tail of pancreas which can be deduced from the fact that it has a wide sphere of action on the thyroid, salivary glands, intestinal glands and mucous glands which function auto Nominally.

Pancreatinum is a sarcodes prepared from the pancreatic extract obtained from hog, ox, sheep or calf. It is therapeutically administered for indigestion and steatorrhea. These symptoms signify seat of action over the exocrine portion of the pancreas. Yet, J H Clarke refers to the effectiveness of this drug in pancreatic diabetes on the analogy of Thyroid and other sarcodes.

Alloxanum Anhydrate is a compound which can selectively destroy the insulin-producing cells of the pancreas. The toxicological study on the animals that produced rapid degeneration of the pancreas was referred to as alloxanic diabetes. Homeopathically, this drug should unmistakably be effective in Type I Diabetes Mellitus. However, it is often prescribed in clinical practice for Non-Insulin Dependent Diabetes Mellitus.

Asimina triloba/Carica Papaya contains papayotin, an enzyme obtained from the unripe fruit of papaya, has a similar action to that of trypsin, a protease secreted by the pancreas that is responsible for the digestion of proteins. It becomes deficient in chronic pancreatitis producing sticky, greasy and lienteric stools. This remedy is indicated for the mentioned symptoms and also aids in the digestive processes of weak patients ^[10].

4. Remedy Reckoner

The extensive works of O A Julian are perceived from his books 'Materia Medica of new Homeopathic remedies' and 'Materia medica of Nosodes with Repertory'.

Acute Hemorrhagic Pancreatitis: Acyranthus calea, Iris versicolor

Acute pancreatitis: Cortisonum, Hedera Helix, Histaminum, Thalamus, Ourlianium, Belladonna, Conium metallicum, Iris versicolor, Iodum, Latrodectus mactans

Carcinoma of the pancreas: Aurum met, Baryta carb, Baryta mur, Calcarea ars, Carbo animalis, Silicea

Chronic pancreatitis: Beryllium metallicum, Calcarea Fluor, Mandragora, Parathyroidinum, Perhexilinum maleatum, Rauwolfia Serp, Selenium, Taraxacum, Viscum album, Bacillus gaertner, Iodum, Phosphorus, Secale cor, Spongia.

Fibrocystic disease of pancreas: Butyric acid, Aranea ixobola, Beryllium metallicum, Chromium metallicum.

Pancreatic abscess: Eberthinum, Hepar sulph

Pancreatic disorders: DNA, Gutteria Gaumeri, Magnesium fluor, RNA, Adeps suis, Atropinum, Calcarea phos, Oleum jecoris, Trifolium pretense.

Pancreatic Diabetes: Corticotopinum, Alloxanum, Insulin, Manganum group, Natrum sulph

Pancreatic stones: Chionanthus, Lycopodium, Niccolum met ^[7]

5. Case Notes

A lady of 36 years was diagnosed to have pancreatic stones and Cholecholithiasis. Surgery was the only option. Owing to her poverty she sought Homeopathic treatment. Her case was seriously analyzed and Pulsatilla Nig was selected constitutionally. The drug was administered in the 30th potency for three consecutive days once in the morning. Also, Chionanthus Virginicus mother tincture, Five drops thrice a day was prescribed as an organopathic remedy due to the rapid progression of the destruction of the liver and bile duct that was indicated by the elevated SGOT and ALP levels in her blood report. A review haematology test was done on the third day keeping in mind the consequences and the report showed an improvement in the blood parameters and also symptomatically. But the treatment was discontinued due to the fear of pancreatic ductal rupture from pancreatic stones.

A 57-year-old male suffered from a migraine, epigastric pain and sticky stools for the past 15 years suggested chronic pancreatitis. The GI symptoms were episodic in nature. His pains aggravated whenever he leaned on the backrest of the chair. Iris versicolor 30th potency was prescribed for five days as an organopathic medicine. He was relieved from his GI complaints and the migraine attacks also started reducing in number and intensity.

6. Conclusion

The utility of Homeopathic medicines in pancreatic disorders are yet to be explored in a scientific manner by administering them into diseased patients and observed in a hospital setup that is equipped with an emergency care. As the above mentioned case notes point out a possible beneficial action on pancreatic ailments. A carefully formulated well-designed research protocol may effect a replacement in the conventional surgical management for Pancreatic disorders.

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