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Dr. P Dastagiri

MD Homoeo, Research
Officer/Scientist-1,
National Homoeopathy
Research Institute in Mental
Health, Under Central Council
for Research In Homoeopathy,
Ministry of AYUSH,
Kottayam, Kerala, India

Dr. Nirmala Pratap

P.G. Scholar, Department of
Practice of Medicine, National
Homoeopathy Research
Institute in Mental Health,
Under Central Council for
Research In Homoeopathy,
Ministry of AYUSH,
Kottayam, Kerala, India

Corresponding Author:

Dr. P Dastagiri

MD Homoeo, Research
Officer/Scientist-1,
National Homoeopathy
Research Institute in Mental
Health, Under Central Council
for Research in Homoeopathy,
Ministry of AYUSH,
Kottayam, Kerala, India

Miasmatic perspective in nutritional deficiency disorders

Dr. P Dastagiri and Dr. Nirmala Pratap

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Abstract

Though centuries, food is essential for human beings in health and disease. Nutrition is the science of food and its relationship to health. Poor nutrition leads to poor immunity and susceptibility to a different type of infectious disease, metabolic diseases, so forth. Significant advancement has been made during the past 50 years in nutrition and causes of deficiency at cellular levels. A deficiency results from either absolute lack of required food nutrients or defect in assimilation at internal milieu, resulting in Malnutrition. The causes of Malnutrition are multifactorial, particularly in Homoeopathy, the causes of disease or deficiency by the fundamental causes, i.e., Miasm. A thorough understanding of miasms makes easier to treat the innumerable type of chronic diseases, especially Nutritional deficiency disorders. It is necessary to diagnose these deficiency disorders with clinical tools, assess the underlying Miasm, and prescribe the remedy based on the totality of the patient's symptoms.

Keywords: nutritional deficiency disorders, homoeopathy, miasm

Introduction

Food is requisite to stay healthy. The pure ailments of food and drink satisfy our hunger and thirst and support our strength by replacing the parts (tissues) lost in the vital process without disturbing the functions of organs or impairing the health.

Nutrition is defined as the science of food and its relationship to health. It is concerned primarily with the part played by nutrients in body growth, development, and maintenance.

Nutrient or food factor is used for specific dietary constituents such as proteins, vitamins, and minerals.

Good nutrition means maintaining a nutritional status that enables us to grow well and enjoy good health.

A balanced diet is defined as one which contains a variety of food in such quantities and proportions that the need for energy, amino acids, vitamins, minerals, fats, carbohydrates, and other nutrients is adequately met for maintaining health, vitality, and general well-being and also makes a small provision for extra nutrients to withstand the short duration of leanness. A balanced diet has become an accepted means to safeguard a population from nutritional deficiencies.

Nutrition disorders occur when a person's dietary intake does not contain the right amount of nutrients for healthy functioning or cannot correctly absorb food nutrients. An incorrect balance of nutrients, under nutrition, and overnutrition may cause various nutrition disorders. Deficiencies can lead to various health problems, such as digestion problems, skin problems, stunted or defective bone growth, and even dementia. Unless we are seriously deficient for some time, we may notice no symptoms at all, leading us to believe (falsely) that our body is getting all the nutrition we need. More often, however, such deficiencies do cause symptoms, which can range from minor to severe ^[1].

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Malnutrition refers to deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person's energy and nutrients intake ^[2].

Malnutrition was one of the predominant risk factors for death in younger children below five years of age in India in 2017. This condition's prevalence is 68.2% of the total under-five deaths, and 17.3% is responsible for total Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs). Among these, the low birth weight was 21.4%, child stunting 39.3%, child wasting 15.7%, child underweight 32.7%, anaemia in children 59.7%, in women 54.4% reported in 2017 ^[3].

The fundamental principle of Homoeopathy, a unique scientific system of medicine discovered by Dr Samuel Hahnemann, is that "*Similia Similibus Curentur*".

It means "like is cured by like", i.e., a disease may be cured by something that can cause similar symptoms. This system is concerned with treating the whole person rather than disease alone. The remedy selection will depend on all the patient's symptoms, including mental and emotional state, physical generals, including the miasmatic background from his/her family history, past history, and treatment history. Along with indicated remedy or simillimum, the diet and regimen play a pivotal role in treating acute or chronic diseases. Nutritional disorders are caused by an insufficient intake of food or certain nutrients by an inability of the body to absorb and result from a relative deficiency of one or more essential nutrients and manifested in various forms of physical or mental illness. Homoeopathy promotes that when there is an imbalance in nutritional requirement and its

source, the deficient nutrients should be corrected by providing a balanced diet and assimilating and absorbing the same. If the body is too weak to absorb the nutrients or unable to assimilate, consider the miasmatic predominance. Thus, the objective of this article is to give a miasmatic perspective to nutritional disorders.

Materials and Methods

The clinical signs and symptoms of nutritional deficiency disorders are correlated with the existing Homoeopathic literature, particularly for Miasmatic diagnosis and represented in table 1. The nutritional disorders clinical assessment is mentioned under Table.2. Commonly indicated, therapeutics also mentioned under Table.3.

Table 1: Nutritional disorders and miasmatic correlation ^[4-19]

S. No	Deficiency	Signs and symptoms	Miasm
1.	Vitamin-A	Night blindness	Psora +Syphilitic
		Conjunctival xerosis- "Emerging like sandbanks at receding tide".	Psora
		Corneal ulceration, vision lost	Syphilitic
		Bitot's spots	Not mentioned
		Follicular hyperkeratosis	Psora
		Anorexia and Growth retardation	Psora
2.	Vitamin-D	Rickets, soft and curved bones	Tubercular
		Pigeon chest	Tubercular
		Irregular depression in the chest cavity	Syphilitic
		Curves and lines in the chest wall are imperfect and certain area may be sunken and depressed.	Tubercular
		Osteomalacia	Syphilitic
3	Vitamin- E	Ataxia, dysarthria, male infertility, nerve damage.	Tubercular
4	Vitamin-K, (Tocopherol)	Bleeding disorders	Tubercular
5	Vitamin-B1, (Thiamine)	Beriberi (Dry and Wet)	Psora+Sycotic
		Wernick's Encephalopathy- by ophthalmoplegia, polyneuritis, ataxia, and mental deterioration.	Tubercular
6	Vitamin- B2, (Riboflavin)	Angular stomatitis,	Psora
		Cheilosis, glossitis,	Tubercular
		Poor wound healing	Tubercular
7	Vitamin- B3, (Niacin)	Diarrhoea	Psora
		Dermatitis	Psora
		Dementia	Tubercular
8	Vitamin- B6 (Pyridoxin)	Peripheral neuritis	Tubercular
9	Folate	Megaloblastic anaemia,	Sycosis
		Glossitis, cheilosis.	Tubercular
		Gastrointestinal disturbance like diarrhoea, distension, and flatulence.	Psora
		and Severe folate deficiency may cause infertility or sterility	Psora+Sycotic
10	Vitamin- B12 (Methyl cobalamin)	Megaloblastic anemia (Pernicious anemia),	Psora+ Sycotic
		a demyelinating neurological lesion in the spinal cord	Tubercular
11	Vitamin- C	Swollen and bleeding gums, subcutaneous bruising or bleeding into the skin or joints, delayed wound healing, anaemia, and weakness.	Tubercular
		Oral symptoms associated with gum bleeding	Tubercular
12	Calcium	Teeth decay, brittle teeth, cataract, osteomalacia, rickets, and osteoporosis.	Tubercular
13	Phosphorus	bones and teeth disorders	Tubercular
14	Sodium	Leg cramps	Tubercular
15	Potassium	Hypertension	Psora + Sycotic
16	Magnesium	Irritability, tetany, hyperreflexia.	Tubercular
17	Iron	Anaemia- RBC is destroyed though imperfect oxidation of food. This can lead to the anaemic condition, which may be evidenced by a lack of stamina in the muscles and a pallor, drowsy, puffy appearance	Sycotic
18	Iodine	Glandular disorders, nervous system, endocrine system,	Psora.
19	Fluorine	Dental caries and Fluorosis	Tubercular or Syphilitic
20	Zinc	Skin and Nervous system	Tubercular
21	Copper	Anaemia and Nervous disorders	Psora+ Sycosis+ Syphilitic

22	Cobalt	Cardiomyopathy, congestive cardiac failure, pericardial effusion, polycythemia, and thyroid enlargement.	Psora + Sycotic
23	Chromium	Hyperinsulinemia, increase in Haematological parameters (hemoglobin, hematocrit, erythrocytes, leucocytes and mean erythrocyte volume); increased total protein concentrations	Psora
24	Manganese	Bleeding disorders due to increased Prothrombin time while accumulation over a long period causes anorexia, apathy, headache, impotence, leg cramps, speech disturbance, encephalitis like syndrome, and parkinsonian like syndrome. Psychosis	Tubercular or Syphilitic.
25	Selenium	Infertility in men and women, muscle weakness, growth retardation, fatigue, mental fog, hair loss, weakened immune system, depressed mood, anxiety, and confusion.	Psora + Sycosis
26	Molybdenum	Brain abnormalities, including deterioration (atrophy) of brain tissue, lead to severe developmental delay; affected individuals usually do not learn to sit unassisted or to speak. Tachycardia, tachypnoea,	Tubercular++ Syphilitic.
27.	Protein-Energy malnutrition.	Marasmus or Kwashiorkor	Tubercular or Sycotic.

Discussion

Hahnemann has given instructions in § 4 and § 5 that the physician is a preserver of health and must know the cause of the disease; only after removing the cause, we will obtain the cure. This statement is very similar to what Thomas Edison was concerned about in 1903, his time's healthcare and stated: "The doctor of the future will give no medicine but will interest his patient in the care of the human frame, diet and the cause and prevention of disease" [20].

Nutrition and susceptibility

Dr Stuart Close defines susceptibility as the general quality or capability of the living organism of receiving impression: the power to react to stimuli. It is primarily the reaction of the organism to external and internal influences [21]. Dr H.A. Roberts explained that the Importance of nutrition and relation to susceptibility proves that the power of assimilation and nutrition is one of the phases of susceptibility [6]. Furthermore, Dr Dhawle M.L. mentioned in his Principles and Practice of Homoeopathy under chapter Susceptibility that "normal susceptibility leads to a state of good health characterized by good nutrition and a healthy outlook on life. On the other hand, abnormal susceptibility affects them in the first instance and interferes with adaption, thereby leading to the disease's development [22]. Poor nutrition leads to susceptibility to infectious diseases, immunological dysfunction and metabolic disorders. The experimental studies proved the relationship between diet and different type of infections scientifically [23, 24].

Causation of the nutrition deficiency disorders

Dr Hahnemann has divided the disease basing on the causation of the diseases. These causes are the exciting cause, maintaining and fundamental. Indeed, the fundamental cause or cause of all chronic diseases are Chronic miasms. § 72 explicitly define that the chronic disease will begin with small, often imperceptible beginnings, dynamically derange the living organism, each in its own peculiar manner, and cause it gradually deviate

from the healthy condition, in such a way that the automatic life energy, called vital force, whose office is to preserve the health, only opposes to them at the commencement and during their progress imperfect, unsuitable, useless resistance, but is unable of itself to extinguish them, but most helplessly suffer itself to be ever more and more abnormally deranged, until at length the organism is destroyed. They are caused by dynamic infection with a chronic miasm. In § 88, he mentioned that the Psora, the only real, fundamental cause and producer of all the other numerous diseases [8].

Dr Kent emphasized under the Chronic disease that the 'congenital debility and marasmus, and varying disease of a chronic character that carry off the little ones have their underlying cause of chronic Miasm. Further, he reaffirmed the Hahnemann's cause of all chronic diseases is Psora- 'a hydra-headed, oldest, most universal and most pernicious chronic miasmatic illness' [7].

Dr H.A. Roberts explicated under chapter Disease Classification, in concerning complete cure removal of the cause is the first step. At times, surgical procedures, the rectification of diet, the removal of irritating substances, change of environment, anything and everything take itself when the cause is removed. He further emphasized that Psora causes all nutritional disorders. He clearly defined that about deficiency disorders, aroused due to lack of certain elements in our system, or the inability to assimilate nutrients from foods, it the great common denominator of almost all so-called Psoric conditions, plus a lack of balance in the equilibrium of health that manifests through a hypersensitivity of impressions-functional disturbances and the patient's recognizance of disturbance that varies from consciousness to neuroses [6].

Nutritional Assessment [25].

Unfortunately, there is no single clinical or laboratory indicator to assess the comprehensive nutritional status. Therefore, it requires the systematic integration of information by history and physical examination of the patient. However,

Table 2: summarized the physical findings of the characteristics of nutrient deficiencies. Table-2

S. No	Element	Notes & Findings
1.	History of the Patient	Weight loss of >10% of usual body weight is prognostic of clinical outcomes. Look for any medical or surgical conditions or chronic diseases. Any medications that can adversely affect nutrient intake or assimilation. Enquire about dietary intake, supplements. Ask about socio-demographic data, habits, and lifestyles.
2.	Body Mass Index (BMI)	BMI= weight in kg/ (height in meters) ² BMI< 18.5 kg/m ² proposed to screen Malnutrition as per National Institute of Health guidelines.
3.	Weight Loss	Look for loss of muscle mass and subcutaneous fat. Temporal and neck muscle wasting, anthropometrics including skin-folds and circumferences can be helpful.
4.	Weakness/ loss of strength	Decreased hand-grip and leg extensor strength. Lower extremity weakness may be observed in thiamine deficiency.
5.	Peripheral oedema	It may confound weight measurements and is often observed with reduced visceral proteins as well as inflammatory states. It may also be observed in Thiamine deficiency.
6.	Hair examination	Hair findings are indicative of specific nutrient deficiency. Loss: Protein, B12, Folate Brittle: Biotin Colour change: Zinc Dry: vitamin A and E Easy pluck ability: Protein, Biotin, zinc. Coiled, corkscrew: vitamin A and C Alopecia is common in severely malnourished persons. Ask about excessive hair loss on a pillow or when combing the hair.
7.	Skin Examination	Desquamation; riboflavin Petechiae; Vitamin A and C Perifollicular haemorrhage: Vitamin C Ecchymosis; Vitamin C and K Xerosis, bran -like desquamation: essential fatty acids Pigmentation, cracking, crusting: Niacin Acneiform lesions, follicular keratosis, xerosis: Vitamin A Acro-orofacial dermatitis, erythematous, vesiculobullous, and pustular: zinc. Wounds and pressure sores should also be noted as indicators of compromised nutritional status.
8.	Eye examination	Bitot's spots: Vitamin A Xerosis: Vitamin A Angular palpebritis: Riboflavin Night blindness: Vitamin A
9.	Perioral examination	Angular stomatitis and cheilosis; B complex, iron and protein Glossitis: niacin, Folate, and Vitamin B12 Magenta tongue: Riboflavin Bleeding Gums, gingivitis, tooth loss: Vitamin C Angular stomatitis, cheilosis, glossitis, poor dentition, caries, tooth loss, difficulty swallowing and impairment of gas are associated with vitamin and mineral deficiencies.
10.	Extremity / Nervous examination	Arthralgia: Vitamin C Calf pain: thiamine Ophthalmoplegia and foot drop: thiamine Paresthesia: Thiamine, vitamin B12, and biotin. Depressed vibratory and position senses; Vitamin B 12 Hyporeflexia, loss of lower extremity deep tendon reflexes: thiamine and Vitamin B12.
11.	Mental status examination	Anxiety, depression, dementia, and hallucinations: Niacin Memory disturbances: vitamin B12 Wernicke-Korsakoff syndrome – Severe thiamine deficiency.

Therapeutics: [26]

S. No	Clinical Condition	Therapeutics
1.	Night blindness	Argentum. Nitricum., China, Cyclamen, Hyoscyamus, Lycopodium, Ranunculus. bulbosus, Stramonium, Sulphur, Veratrum. album
2.	Corneal ulcers and scars	Arsenicum album, Calcarea carb, Hepar sulph, Kali. Bich, Lachesis, Merc.sol., Natrum. muriaticum, Silicea, Sulphur
3.	Rickets	Calcarea carb, Calcarea Phos, Causticum, Fluoric Acid, Lycopodium, Merc.sol, Phos, Phos.acid, Silicea, Sulphur, Syphilinum, Symbphytum,
4.	Osteomalacia	Calcarea carb, Calcarea. Fluorica, Calcarea Phos, Fluoric acid, Merc.sol, Phos, Silicea,
5.	Bleeding disorders	Arnica, Crocus. Sativus, Ferrum. Met, Lachesis, Phosphorus., Secale cornutum,
6.	Neuritis	Aconite napellus, Arsenicum. album., Causticum., Lac.caninum, Merc.solubulis, Nux.vomica, Phosphorus, Silicea., Sulphur.,
7.	Stomatitis-	Baptisia tinctoria, Borax, Hydrastis, Muriatic. acid
8.	Glossitis-	Arsenicum. album., Benzoic.acid, Cantharis, Lachesis Merc. sol, Sulph.acid.,

9.	Anaemia	Alumina, Cina, Hydrastis, Ferrum. met, Natrum. mur., Nux.Vomica, Pulsatilla., Silicea,
10.	Gingivitis-	Bovista, Calcarea. carb, Carbo vegetabilis, Crotalus.horridus, Lachesis, Merc.sol, Natrum. mur, Nitric. Acid, Phosphorus.,
11.	Marasmus-	Abrotanum, Calcarea Phos, Iodium, Lycopodium, Muriatic. acid, Natrum. Mur, Oleum Jecoris Aselli., Silicea, Sulphur,
12.	Dental caries and Fluorosis-	Antimonium. Crud, Belladonna, Borax, Fluoric acid. Merc.sol., Mezereum, Plumbum metallicum., Staphysagria.
13.	Ataxia	Agaricus, Alumina, Causticum, Conium maculatum, Cuprum met, Gelsemium sempervirens, Helleborus, Nux Vomica, Onosmodium, Phosphoric acid, Picric acid, Plumbum metallicum, Stramonium., Zincum metallicum.

These therapeutics are for suggestion only.

Conclusion

Homoeopathy is a holistic system of medicine, and it considers man as a whole. Miasms are the fundamental cause of alteration in healthy human beings. In aphorism 261, Dr Hahnemann gave directions about diet and regimen, treating nutritional disorders like "The most appropriate regimen during the employment of medicine in chronic diseases consists in the removal of such obstacles to recovery, and in supplying where necessary the reverse: innocent moral and intellectual recreation, an active exercise in the open air in almost all kinds of weather (daily walks, slight annual labor) Suitable, nutritious, unmedicinal food and drink, etc. Understanding the miasmatic perspective of various nutritional deficiencies is necessary for every Homoeopath. Apart from Psoric Miasm, Tubercular Miasm also plays a vital role in most of the nutritional deficiencies. Sycosis, Syphilitic trait, and some deficiencies like vitamin A, copper deficiency disorders mixed Miasm causes the diseases. This type of miasmatic manifestations will develop because of the inability to assimilation; the results present various clinical presentations and will continue to be corrected through a healthier diet and natural way of living like active exercise and exposure to sunlight., and so forth. The indicated ultra-dilution of the miasmatic remedy would be alleviating the signs and symptoms of the nutritional disorders. Even after giving nutrients that are deficient through diet or directly, the respective miasmatic treatment is necessary to remove the fundamental cause of illnesses, the Miasm, to establish the cure. Dr J. H. Allen concluded that "we cannot select the most similar remedy possible unless we understand the phenomenon of the acting and basic miasms; for the true similar is always based upon the basic Miasm, whether we be conscious or unconscious of the fact.

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