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Elevated serum thyroid stimulating hormone concentration treated with homoeopathy: A case report

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Abstract

Hypothyroidism is emerging to be one of the most common endocrinological disorders worldwide which when left undetected or untreated leads to severe complications. However, clinical manifestations vary from serious symptoms to certain non-specific symptoms like fatigue, weight gain, depression or aches and pains. It occurs more in women and a positive family history of thyroid diseases where traced frequently. Thyroid stimulating hormone is highly sensitive to thyroid dysfunction and commonly used to evaluate thyroid disorders. The standard treatment of hypothyroidism restores the thyroid function by daily use of the synthetic hormone tablets. Homoeopathic medicine plays a significant role in management of thyroid disorder. A case reported in the OPD of National Homoeopathy Research Institute in Mental Health, Kottayam with reports of raised levels of thyroid stimulating hormone showed its reduction after administration of Homoeopathic medicine. This is documentary evidence showing that an underactive thyroid gland is effectively acted upon by Homoeopathic interventions to bring about desired effects.

Keywords: Hypothyroidism, thyroid stimulating hormone, case report, homoeopathy

Introduction

The thyroid is a small gland located anterior to the trachea between the cricoid cartilage and the suprasternal notch. It consists of two lobes connected by an isthmus. The normal thyroid is 12–20 grams in size, soft in consistency and highly vascular. Hypothyroidism is a disease in which the thyroid gland does not produce enough thyroid hormone and it is emerging to be one of most common endocrinological disorders worldwide^[1].

The thyroid gland produces mainly two hormones, thyroxine (T4) and triiodothyronine (T3). Production of T3 and T4 in the thyroid gland is stimulated by thyrotrophin or thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH), a glycoprotein released from the thyrotroph cells of anterior pituitary in response to the hypothalamic tripeptide, thyrotrophin-releasing hormone. In primary hypothyroidism, there is inadequate production of thyroid hormone by the thyroid gland, whereas in secondary hypothyroidism, there is inadequate stimulation of thyroid gland by the pituitary. In hypothyroidism, there is decreased T3 and T4 with high circulating TSH levels. Most common causes of hypothyroidism include autoimmune disease like Hashimoto's thyroiditis, radioactive iodine ablation and surgical removal of thyroid. Iodine deficiency, congenital conditions like dyshormonogenesis and thyroid aplasia, infiltrative causes like amyloidosis, Riedel's thyroiditis and sarcoidosis, etc. can also lead to hypothyroidism. Thyroid axis is involved in regulation of cellular differentiation and metabolism in almost all nucleated cells, and therefore thyroid has an effect on energy levels of the body, circulation, immunity and growth and development of the body. So thyroid dysfunctions have diverse manifestations ranging from common symptoms like fatigue, somnolence, dry skin, dry hair, menorrhagia and weight gain to less common features like constipation, hoarseness, carpal tunnel syndrome, alopecia, depression, infertility, bradycardia and dermal myxoedema. Thyroid disorders predominantly affect females. Although most cases of hypothyroidism are not clinically obvious, a high index of suspicion needs to be maintained so that diagnosis is not overlooked in the middle aged women complaining of non-specific symptoms such as tiredness, weight gain, depression or carpal tunnel syndrome^[2]. Diagnosis of hypothyroidism is by assessing levels of serum TSH, T3 and T4. Thyroid auto-antibodies such as anti thyroid peroxidase (anti-TPO) and anti-thyroglobulin are tested in case of Hashimoto's thyroiditis.

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Ultra-sonography of thyroid gland is used for detecting any inflammations or nodules or swellings.

Homeopathic remedy helps the body to stimulate the thyroid gland to overcome deficiency and gives relief for discomforting signs and symptoms. Some Homeopathic remedies that help in improving thyroid functions are Iodum, Bromium, Thyroidinum, Spongia etc. According to a clinical study by Prajakta Ghare et al., Homoeopathic medicine Thyroidinum has potential to treat subclinical hypothyroidism and may prevent patients from progressing to overt hypothyroidism [3]. An exploratory randomized control study in Homeopathy by Chauhan VK et al, shows a statistically significant decline in serum TSH values and Anti-TPO after Homoeopathic intervention which indicates that the homeopathic medicine has not only potential to treat subclinical hypothyroidism and but may also prevent progression to overt hypothyroidism [4].

Case report

A female-aged 34 years came to General OPD of NHRIMH on April 4th 2019 with symptoms of weakness, hair fall, and heat sensations of body since 1 year. Patient had aching pain in extremities especially left leg and right arm and right forearm, numbness of hands, dysphagia for solids, burning sensation in throat and abdomen after eating since 1 month. Menstrual history revealed scanty flow of bleeding lasting for 14 days and related concomitant symptom of abdominal pain. Patient also noted mild tortuosity of veins of left leg since 1 month.

Patient had a history of chikungunya at the age of 20 years and chickenpox at the age of 30 years both of which were treated with allopathic medications. Family history revealed both parents to be hypertensive, mother as having varicose veins and elder brother as having diabetic.

Generals (mental and physical)

Patient was easily angered due to her complaints but later felt sad and disliked to cry in front of others. She had normal appetite and thirst. Intake of sweets caused eructation. Patient also suffered from burning sensation while passing stool which is relieved after defecation. Her urine was normal and sweat was increased in axillary region. Patient felt sleepiness during daytime. She preferred fanning and bathing in cold water. Couldn't bear hot climate. Thermally towards hot.

On examination, the vital signs were normal. Weight = 64 kg. She was suspected to have hypothyroidism even though there were no evident swellings of thyroid gland on neck.

Diagnosis: hypothyroidism (ICD CODE: E03)

On 2/05/2019 Thyroid hormone levels were tested and TSH was 33.22 μ IU/ml. Total T4-5.2 μ g/ml, Total T3- 98ng/dl. Thus hypothyroidism was confirmed based on thyroid hormone levels.

Prescription, its indications and follow-ups

Considering the presenting totality and raised level of both TSH an organ specific medicine Thyroidinum 1M, 4 doses were prescribed weekly once initially for a month and the same was continued for one more month.

According to Homoeopathic Materia medica by William Beoricke, Thyroidinum is prepared by the trituration of the dried thyroid gland of sheep and its effects are striking in myxoedema and cretinism. Thyroid exercises a general regulating influence over the mechanism of the organs of nutrition, growth and development and its weakness causes a decided craving for a large amount of sweets. Some symptoms covered by this medicine are easy fatigue, excessive obesity, goiter, muscular weakness, sweating, dry congested throat with burning [5].

In the follow up visit, there was reduction in aching pain of legs, numbness of hands, menstrual irregularity and weakness but hairfall and burning sensation in throat and abdomen persisted. Fluoricum Acidum 30, one dose at an interval of 3 days was prescribed for a month, according to symptom similarity on the following visit.

Indications of Fluoricum Acidum: Adapted to patients with chronic diseases. Complaints of varicose veins, weak, distended blood vessels, atony of capillary and venous systems, goiter, alopecia, sour eructations, complaints worse from warmth [5]. According to Clarks Materia Medica Fluoricum Acidum has burning sensation of parts, inflammation in throat with increase of pain and impeded deglutition, constriction of throat with difficult deglutition, lameness of right arm, left leg falls asleep, numbness of limbs, lassitude and loss of strength, drowsiness and sleepiness [6].

Intensity of hairfall reduced. The same medicine was continued for one more month. On two subsequent visits, Thyroidinum 1M was prescribed again and generals of the patient improved. Burning sensations reduced and other presenting concerns of the patient improved. On December 1st 2019, the laboratory investigation showed improvement. The level of TSH reduced considerably to normal limits and the value of T3 and T4 were also tested to be within normal limits.

Investigation reports

Date of follow up	TSH (μ IU/ml)	Total T3(ng/dl)	Total T4(μ g/dl)	
Baseline	02-05-2019	33.22	98	5.2
After 7 months	01-12-2019	3.01	112	9.2

Figures of lab reports

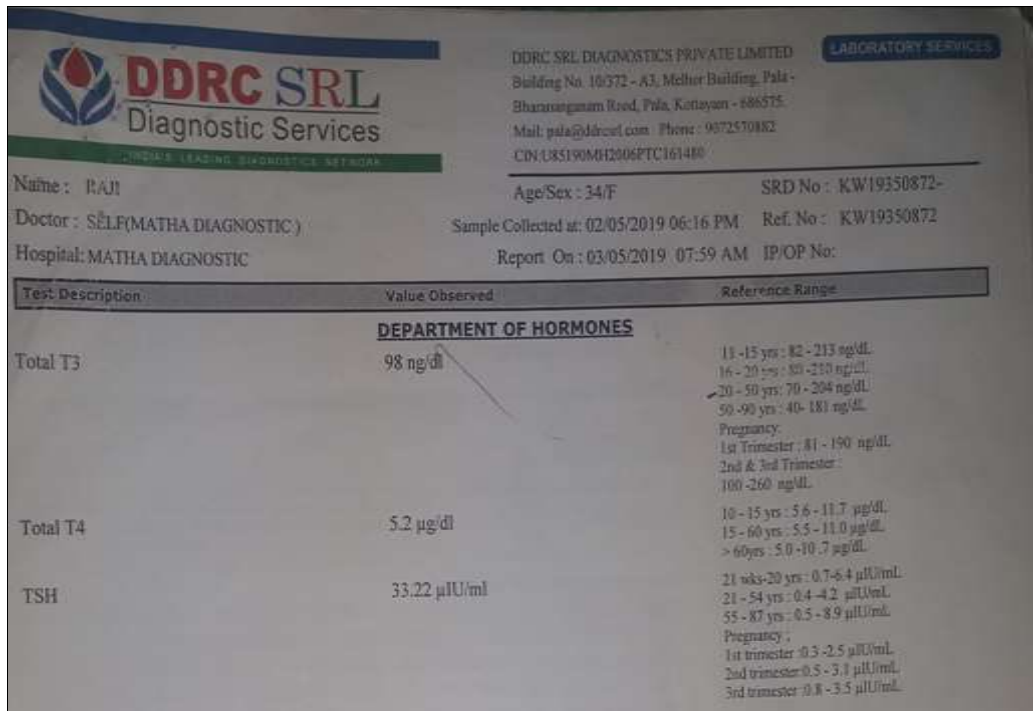


Fig 1: Thyroid Function Test at Baseline.



Fig 2: Thyroid Function Test after 7 months.

Discussion and conclusion

Homeopathy offers immense scope in the treatment of hypothyroidism. Hypothyroidism is emerging to be one of most common chronic, progressive disease endocrinological disorders worldwide which when left undetected or untreated leads to severe complications. Symptoms are kept under control through conventional treatment. However, in due course of time, symptoms of hypothyroidism along with bodily dysfunctions such as menstrual irregularities, weight gain and mood swings, continue despite taking a regular dose of thyroid medicines. Homeopathy treats hypothyroidism without side effects and the medicines are selected according to the patient’s mental and other physical characteristics. Homeopathy is an individualized treatment

as it treats each case as unique because the degree of symptoms and disturbance of emotions may change from case to case. Therefore, Homoeopathy based on the principle of ‘Similia similibus curantur’ means “Likes Cure Likes”.

This case indicates that Homoeopathic medicines are effective in treatment of hypothyroidism. There was positive improvement in laboratory values of serum TSH which became a documentary evidence too. The case was followed up for more than 1 year to ensure general improvement of the patient. By stimulating the inner self-mechanism or vital force, Homoeopathy helps to cure diseases. It stimulates the body to reactivate the hormone secretions to normal limits in case of endocrine disorders like hypothyroidism.

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