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Dr. Suman Chaudhary

Associate Professor,

Department of Pathology,

Smt. A.J Savla Homoeopathic

Medical College & R.I,

Mehsana, Gujarat, India

Role of homoeopathy in the management of motion sickness: A brief review

Dr. Suman Chaudhary

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Abstract

Motion sickness is humbling experience of travel. Suddenly becoming pale, perspiring, becoming nauseated and developing an urge to throw up all stomach contain due to the brain receives differing information from the visual, vestibular senses and body proprioceptors. This mismatch of sensory information gives rise to the release of brain chemical agent like neurotransmitter that stimulates the vomiting center. Several Homoeopathic medicines (*Cocculus*, *Ipecacuanha*, *Petroleum*, *Staphisagria*, *Tabacum*, *Theridion*) are most effective for this common problem of traveler.

Keywords: Motion sickness, carsickness, travel sickness, nausea, homoeopathic medicines, mismatch theory

Introduction

'Home sickness and motion sickness is like same side of coin'. You don't know how dreadful it is until you get it, and when you get, it directly hits your stomach and you feel you will die'.

Hippocrates the father of medicine observed more than 2000 years ago that "sailing on the ocean (water) lead to motion of body and that disorders the body". The term nausea derives from the Greek word 'naus' hence nautical meaning a ship.^[1] The last many years modernization of transport and industry have broad the range of stimulating motion environments, to cars, trains, funfair rides, airplane, weightlessness in outer space, virtual simulators^[2].

Among all provocative, land transport is most common factor for motion sickness. An previous survey of 300 undergraduates discovered that 58% had experienced some nausea from car travel and 33% experienced vomiting in cars before the age twelve years^[2].

Motion sickness can be defined as the syndrome of physiological response during movement to which the person is not adapted.

Etiology

- Motion sickness can be developed when the pattern of motion differs from that formerly experienced, in the absence of predictable motion, by unfamiliar (i.e. none adapted) motion stimuli^[3].
- Motion sickness is occurring when there is sensory conflict between body motion perceived by different sensory receptors like visual, vestibular and body proprioceptors^[3, 4].
- The most significant theory explaining the pathogenesis of motion sickness is the 'mismatch theory'. As per to this theory mismatch of the signals of motion from different sensory channels or the mismatch among expected and actual sensory stimulation^[3].

The Clinical Syndrome

The symptoms of motion sickness, develops in a series that differ with intensity of stimulus and person's susceptibility.

The initial symptoms of motion sickness are: giddiness, discomfort, drowsiness, yawning and paleness. An increase in facial pallor is followed by: Cold perspiration, increased salivary secretion, over sensitivity to smell, pain in the occipital region of head, feelings of pressure in upper part of the abdomen.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Suman Chaudhary

Associate Professor,

Department of Pathology,

Smt. A.J Savla Homoeopathic

Medical College & R.I,

Mehsana, Gujarat, India

Finally nausea, retching and vomiting develops with, loss of concentration, motor in-coordination, apathy and felling of dread^[5]. Vomiting is generally developed at last after all of discomfort due to severe motion sickness. If person is sleeping during travelling vomiting may occur immediately after the individual has get out of sleep^[5].

Diagnosis

Diagnosis mainly based on the clinical side, on the basis of symptoms^[6,7].

- **History:** Person may complain of tiredness, nausea, giddiness, cold sweating, occipital headache, upper abdominal discomfort, and /or vomiting during travel. Individual often narrate an earlier experience of motion sickness.
- **Physical examination:** (To rule out other pathology) the Person will be absolute healthy when not in motion.
- **Investigations:** There are no specific investigations for motion sickness. Other investigations can be advised like 1) Tests for ear function: Test of hearing, Labyrinthine test: Caloric test, 2) Radiological examination of the mastoid, cervical spine and skull. 3) Pathological investigations: Haemogram, Glucose tolerance curve. 4) Neurological investigations like cerebrospinal fluid examination, cerebral angiography. 5) CT scan, M.R.I. of head etc. To rule out other underlying pathology^[6,7].

Complication

In rare cases, severe motion sickness with nausea and severe vomiting for long period can lead to dehydration and prostration^[5].

Homoeopathic View

Dr. James Tyler Kent describe in his lectures on homoeopathic philosophy in simple substance chapter, that the individual has an adaptation to his environment, but what is it that adapts itself to environment? The simple substance which act as a vital force adapt itself to its surrounding, and thus the human body is kept in a state of order under all circumstances. Any disturbance is occurs in the vital substance and we see how suddenly incoordination will come^[8]. Motion sickness is also syndrome of response during movement to which the person is not adapted.

J.H Allen in his book chronic miasm, had described that there are many way in which idiosyncrasy is manifested in the organism. It is clearly manifest in people who travel. They have nausea or vertigo while riding in a carriage^[9]. Idiosyncrasy, dyscrasia, predisposition and even certain forms of temperament are all climaxes of perversion or change and stand forth as the finished work within the organism of action of chronic miasm^[11].

As a motion sickness is a functional disturbance (i.e vital substance fail to adapt a motion stimuli) represent a Psoric tendency^[10]. For ascertaining it Hahnemann describe in Orgnon of medicine that the constitution of patient, his/her age, his/her occupation, mode of living, habits and addictions, his/her familial and social relations, his/her moral and intellectual quality and sexual function etc, all are taken into consideration. In this perspective, the homoeopaths have more holistic and individualistic approach to treat motion sickness^[11].

The conventional treatment cannot offer a cure; simply treating motion sickness on the basis of symptomatology

perhaps fail to give permanent cure and medication used to treat or prevent motion sickness may cause weaken alertness and poor performance. These individuals have to avoid operating heavy machinery or driving vehicle or making any important decision while on medication for motion sickness. While searching about the scope of homoeopathic remedies for motion sickness in different therapeutics books and in material medica, numbers of remedies are given,

- Nausea and Vomiting while riding in carriage or on the cars, or from such motions: *Cocculus*, Petroleum, Sepia, Arsenic alb, Nuv- Vomica, Silicea, *Theridion*, *Tabacum*, *Staphisagria*^[12,13].
- Headache riding in a carriage or in the cars, or from such motions: *Cocculus*, Sepia, Graphitis, Ignatia, Hepar-sulph, Kali carbs, Nux-m^[12,13].
- Vertigo while riding in carriage or on the cars or from such motions: Hepar-sulph, Silicea, *Cocculus Indicus*, Petroleum, Sepia, *Tabacum*.^[12,13]
- Weakness, riding from: *Cocculus Indicus*, Petroleum, Sepia, *Tabacum*^[12,13].

Some of homoeopathic medicines described below,

Homoeopathic therapeutics on motion sickness

Borax: Nausea, salivation, vomiting, colic, diarrhea and faintness. Upset by downward motion like airplane, elevator, rocking. Anxiety with downward motion^[14,16].

Cocculus: Nausea and vomiting from motion especially during travelling in cars, boats, or looking at a moving boat aggravated from taking cold and becoming cold. Metallic taste in mouth. Wants to lie down and be still without any movement, ameliorated by fixing eyes on one thing^[14]. Vertigo especially when riding. Headache especially at occipital region and nape of neck from riding in a carriage. All symptoms of *Cocculus* are worse from riding in a carriage or on shipboard. Feeling of emptiness and hollow. Feels weak to talk loudly^[12].

Ipecacuanha: Constant nausea and vomiting without any relief; along with pale and twitching of face. Vomit of food, mucus, bile. Mouth moist with much saliva. Stomach feels relaxed with sensation of hanging down. Headache with bruised feeling, Pain of head extends to root of tongue and to teeth^[12].

Petroleum: Sea sickness or air sickness or motion sickness^[14]. Nausea from motion of a carriage, with accumulation of water in the mouth, water brash, sour eructation and regurgitation.^[15] Greenish and bitter vomiting^[15]. Feeling of weakness and emptiness in stomach, Pressure on the stomach. Diarrhea aggravated from ridding in a carriage. Ailments from travelling in cars, ships or carriage^[12].

Sanicula: Seasickness, Nausea and vomiting from travelling in cars or close carriage with preference for open air. Nausea and cramps in stomach like motion sickness. Thirst desire for little and often water to drink, but it vomited out as soon as reaches to stomach^[15]. Anxiety with downward motion^[12].

Sepia: Weak empty feeling in pit of stomach. Nausea and vertigo from any type of motion like seeing moving objects, motion of cars, passive motion. Great exhaustion and chilliness of body^[15].

Staphisagria: Sea Sickness-Long lasting vertigo along with continued nausea. Before vomiting dizziness and nausea as during travelling sickness. Recurrent empty eructation with sensation of weight on stomach. Headache brain feels as if torn and squeezed especially on rising from bed, any motion, amelioration from rest and warmth ^[12]. Head confused, dull feeling with inability to perform any mental work ^[15].

Sulphur: Dizziness from rising from bed, from crossing river, from looking at running water with sudden loss of sight. Nausea with vomiting, vomiting of water first, afterwards food vomited out. All gone sensation in stomach ^[15].

Tabacum: Seasickness. Nausea and vomiting on least motion. Faint sinking feeling at pit of stomach. Relaxation feeling in the stomach along with nausea. The giddiness, death like pallor, nausea, vomiting, ice-coldness with intermitten pulse. Vomiting of water with yellow and greenish reflection before eyes. The vomiting reoccur from slightest movement ^[14, 15].

Theridion: Sea sickness. Vertigo with nausea and vomiting from least motion, closing eyes, fast ridding on car or ships or in carriage. Nervous women shuts her eyes to get rid of the motion of the vessel and becomes deathly sick. Flickering before eyes even on closed eyes and it lead to nausea and vomiting which is aggravated by noise. Least noise penetrates the body mainly teeth ^[15]. Anxiety about heart. Ice- cold sweat with vertigo ^[12].

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