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Homoeopathic Approach to Liver Cirrhosis

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Abstract

In more developed countries, cirrhosis is an increasing cause of morbidity and mortality and is the 14th most common cause of death world over. In liver cirrhosis, liver is insidiously damaged and normal liver tissue is replaced by scarring and nodule formation which permanently loses its functions. Alcoholic liver disease is the most common cause of liver cirrhosis. The aim of the article is to explore the miasmas involved in liver cirrhosis and also to explore different Homoeopathic medicines having action on the liver.

Keywords: Liver Cirrhosis, Homoeopathy, Alcohol Liver, Miasm, Cardus Marianus

Introduction

Liver cirrhosis is defined as a disease in which liver is insidiously damaged and normal liver tissue is replaced by scarring and nodule formation which permanently loses its functions^[1]. Cirrhosis is defined on the terms of histopathologically and it produces variety of clinical manifestations and complications which sometimes is a threat to life. When cirrhotic liver is seen under microscope it shows scarred hepatocytes and fibrosis of normal hepatic architecture. It has been believed for past several decades that the liver cirrhosis is irreversible condition but now a day it has been observed that after removal of the cause of cirrhosis it can be reversed to its normal architecture. Whatever the cause of cirrhosis at the pathological level the hepatocytes convert into regenerative nodules which are architecturally distorted. This causes the functional loss of the hepatocytes. The fibrosis in the hepatocytes also activates the “hepatic stellate cells” which also increases the collagen and extracellular matrix. Sign and symptoms of the cirrhosis is depending upon the severity of the liver disease. Normally it is assessed by the grading and staging system which can be used for different type of insults on the liver like chronic viral hepatitis, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, and primary biliary cirrhosis. In regards to the degree of fibrosis the liver also compensates its functions and it is essential for a physician to differentiate between the stable, compensated cirrhosis and decompensated cirrhosis. The most severe cases of cirrhosis must be considered for the transplantation^[2].

Causes of Liver Cirrhosis^[3]

1. Alcoholic liver disease- Abuse of alcohol for many years.
2. Chronic hepatitis (B & C).
3. Non Alcoholic liver disease.
4. Autoimmune hepatitis.
5. Primary biliary cholangitis and primary sclerosing cholangitis.
6. Inherited diseases like alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency, Wilson’s disease, and hemochromatosis.
7. Chronic Heart Failure.
8. Certain Drugs i.e. Amiodarone, birth control pills, erythromycin, halothane, statins, Amoxicillin-clavulanate, some anti-seizure medicines etc.^[4].

Clinical Features of Liver Cirrhosis^[5]

1. Loss of Appetite
2. Nausea
3. Fever
4. Weight loss
5. Tiredness

6. Jaundice
7. Oedema
8. Ascites
9. Orange or brown color urine
10. Confusion or difficulty in thinking
11. Malena
12. Spider-like blood vessels that surround small, red spots on skin (telangiectasia's).
13. In men: loss of sex drive, enlarged breasts (gynecomastia), shrunken testicles.
14. In women: premature menopause.

Diagnosis of Liver Cirrhosis

1. Haematological Tests

- A. CBC: which can be used to find any infection and anaemia.
- B. LFT: Alanine Transaminase (ALT), Aspartate Transaminase (AST), and Alkaline Phosphatase (ALP) level increases. Bilirubin increases, Protein levels in blood decreases.
- C. Hepatitis Panel.
- D. Blood tests for autoimmune liver conditions, which includes the antinuclear antibody (ANA), anti-smooth muscle antibody (SMA), and anti-mitochondrial antibody (AMA) tests [6].

2. Radiological Tests

- A. Ultrasound
- B. Computed tomography (CT)
- C. Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

Miasmatic Analysis [9, 10]

S.No	Symptoms of Liver Cirrhosis	PSORA	SYCOSIS	Syphilis
1	Loss of Appetite	+		
2	Nausea	+		
3	Fever	+		
4	Weight loss	+		
5	Tiredness/ weariness	+		
6	Jaundice	+		
7	Oedema	+	+	
8	Ascites/ Dropsy	+	+	
9	Orange or brown color urine	+		
10	Confusion or difficulty in thinking	+	+	
11	Malena			+
	fibrosis in the hepatocytes			+
12	Spider-like blood vessels that surround small, red spots on skin (telangiectasia's)	+	+	
13	In men: loss of sex drive, enlarged breasts (gynecomastia), shrunken testicles.	+	+	+
14	In women: premature menopause.	+		

Therapeutics of Liver Cirrhosis

1. Argentum Nitricum [11]

Cirrhosis from malaria cachexia; stitching pain in liver, comes with a jar; fullness feeling in the liver, which is painful, along with occasional stinging and drawing type of pain, < moving around, may reach chest; periodically dull stitches are felt in the anterior surface of the liver; hepatic affection, which ends in fatal dropsy; there is pigmentary degeneration.

2. Aurum Metallicum [11]

Hepatic congestion immediately after cardiac disease, accompanied with burning sensation and cutting type of pain in right hypochondrium, leading to liver cirrhosis and its fatty degeneration along with dropsy. Suicidal thoughts,

D. Needle biopsy of the liver.

E. Elastography can be performed with USG or MRI [7].

Homeopathic Approach to Liver Cirrhosis

Homeopathy treats the sick person and not the disease. It means that homeopathic treatment focuses on the patient as a whole and not only the pathological condition. The homeopathic medicines are prescribed after a full individualized examination and analysis of the case, which includes the medical history of the patient, physical and mental constitution, presenting symptoms, family history, underlying pathology, possible causative factors etc. A miasmatic tendency (predisposition/susceptibility) is also often taken into account for the treatment of chronic conditions [8].

Homeopathy not only treats the symptoms of liver cirrhosis but also treats its underlying causes like viral infection, metabolic changes, genetic tendency, bad effects of alcohol intake etc. and helps in treating cirrhosis on the whole.

Homeopathy increases a person's immunity, therefore reducing the viral load and overall health of the liver gradually improves. Homeopathic medication if given in the early stages of liver cirrhosis, it helps in preventing the disease to go further and prevents complications like liver failure or cancer.

This disease condition involves all three miasms (PSORA, SYCOSIS, syphilis), it starts from functional derangement leading to the cellular destruction changes. Miasmatic diagnosis depends upon the pathological condition of the patient.

aversion to movement; jaundice with painful liver and also painful pit of the stomach; urine is greenish-brown; halitosis and bad taste in mouth, there may be either constipation or grayish / ashy-white stool.

3. Bryonia Alba [12]

Swelling of liver, with congestion and inflammation; painful hypochondriac region < motion > lying on right side. Here, jaundice is brought on by a fit of anger. Bryonia patient is chilly, although he appears to be hot. Pungent taste is felt in mouth; the stools are either hard and dry, or loose and profuse with colic. It is primarily considered as a hepatogastric remedy, with giddiness and right shoulder pain. Slightly yellowish colour of eyes and skin.

4. Carbo Vegetabilis ^[11]

Hepatic region is very sensitive and even touch is painful; right lobe of liver is painful, pains are stitching and burning type; clothes are unbearable; there is great flatulency; along with flatus, faeces also escapes.

5. Cardus Marianus ^[11]

Miners working deep under the ground are cachectic; hyperaemia of portal vein; gall-stones; pains are stitching and drawing type, < by pressure and lying on left side; along with jaundice there is dull headache with bitter taste in mouth, tongue is whitish in the centre, edges and tip is reddish; nausea accompanied by acrid greenish vomiting, stools are clayey and pasty, urine is yellow-golden.

6. Iodum ^[11]

There are stitching and pressing type of pains in hepatic region, touch is painful, anorexia, emaciation, profound debility along with diarrhoea, liver is cirrhotic and hard on palpation as emaciation progresses; jaundice is accompanied with tenderness and great pain in the hepatic region.

7. Lycopodium Clavatum ^[11]

Cirrhosis of liver accompanied by ascites, especially seen in drunkards; there is coating of tongue; in the morning there is putrid and sour taste in the mouth; person is hungry, but the food fills up to the throat with few mouthfuls of food, quickly making him hungry again; immediately after eating, discomfort felt in stomach; eating leads to hypochondrial tension, as from a cord, difficulty in stretching or standing upright, cannot bear touch; tendency to hepatic abscess; mortification leads to liver complaints.

8. Magnesia Muriatica ^[11]

Hepatomegaly in children, who are weak and slow in growth and having rickets. Pressing type of pain felt in liver < moving about, or touch, lying on right side; when moving about, there is regurgitation; knotty stools, like dung of sheep or there may be diarrhoea; large tongue with yellowish coating, teeth is imprinted on tongue; person is dyspnoeic with palpitations < when quiet and > moving about; pedal oedema is present; there may be uterine diseases and OS is indurated; haemorrhagic diathesis; fainting fits are frequent; cramps in abdomen are felt which extend into the thighs.

9. Mercurius ^[12]

Liver region has pain and is very sensitive; lying on right side is impossible; hepatomegaly. There is jaundice arising from quinine abuse when fever is present. The stools are either clay-colored, or yellowish and passed with profound tenesmus. Tongue is yellow coated taking the imprint of teeth and there is halitosis, anorexia and depression of spirits. Cowperthwaite believes that, in catarrhal jaundice, as a rule, Mercurius dulcis 2X is most effective.

10 Nux Vomica ^[12]

Suitable to those who have had excess of alcoholic liquors, quinine, or highly seasoned food and prolonged use of purgatives. There is hard swelling of the liver with sensitiveness to touch and pressure of clothing is not comfortable. It may be considered as the first remedy in cirrhosis of liver. There may be colic. If jaundice is induced by anger or by abuse of quinine, it calls for Nux vomica.

11 Phosphorus ^[12]

Suitable medicine for fatty degeneration of the liver, with jaundice and great soreness. The stools are whitish-gray in colour. There may be cirrhosis and atrophy of liver. The jaundice indicates organic disease. In malignant diseases, it is useful. Jaundice along with pneumonia may also be an indication for Phosphorus.

12 Plumbum Metallicum ^[11]

Continuous darting pain is felt in the region of liver; cirrhosis of liver, first the liver enlarges followed by its contraction; hepatic region is sensitive to pressure; heat sensation, and burning felt in spine and the hepatic region; there is continuous sticking pain felt in liver region, first in anterior and then posterior region.

13 Podophyllum ^[12]

Primarily, there is induction of bile flow in large quantity, secondarily, profound lethargy, succeeded by jaundice. When diarrhoea is present, it is indicated in chronically congested liver. Swelling and sensitiveness of the liver, the eyes and face are yellowish in appearance and mouth has bad taste. The tongue is yellowish or white and large bile flow may result in cholelithiasis. Diarrhoea is watery, or if constipated, the stools are clayey in colour. There is resemblance with Mercurius in some ways hence sometimes called as "vegetable mercury." Region of the liver is continuously rubbed with the hand.

14 Selenium ^[11]

Enlarged liver with anorexia, < morning; tongue coated white with no thirst; there is sharp pain with stitches felt in the liver region, < pressure, movement; fine peculiar rash is seen over liver region with sensitiveness on touch.

15 Taraxacum ^[11]

Tongue is mapped with bitter taste in mouth, after drinking or eating, feeling of chilliness, soreness is felt in liver region along with pain; nauseous diarrhoea.

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