



International Journal of Homoeopathic Sciences

E-ISSN: 2616-4493
P-ISSN: 2616-4485
www.homoeopathicjournal.com
IJHS 2023; 7(1): 419-423
Received: 23-11-2022
Accepted: 28-12-2022

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Homoeopathic management of lumbar disc prolapse with spondylosis: A case report

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26164485.2023.v7.i1g.786>

Abstract

Lumbar disc prolapse is a painful condition that occurs due to herniation of nucleus pulposus through annulus fibrosis in the lower spine. Usually this occurs due to wear and tear of outer annulus fibrosis. The spinal nerve root is then got irritated by this disc protrusion resulting pain in lower spinal region and also as radiating pain down to legs. Age is one of the important etiological factors because degenerative changes are very common. Even though this bank officer was above 70 years, and had lumbar spondylosis and scoliosis, after taking the Homoeopathic Constitutional medicine symptomatically relieved. Bryonia 30 and Rhus tox 30 were considered initially but Natrum mur 200 had relieved her pains. Dr. Hahnemann says in Aphorism 210 that in so-called corporeal diseases, always has alteration in mind and disposition.

Keywords: Lumbar disc prolapse, lumbar spondylosis, scoliosis, constitutional medicine, natrum mur

Introduction

Lumbar disc prolapses also known as herniated disc or slipped disc affects only less than five percent of all problems of low back. It is the most common etiology for sciatica or nerve root pain^[1]. Low back pain is experienced by almost 80% of people at some point of their lives and some cases may be due to either a bulging, protruding or a ruptured disc^[2]. L4-L5 or L5-S1 is the common site for 95% of lumbar disc prolapse in third to fifth decade of life. As age progresses, tears and fissures results due to reduction in proteoglycans production. Repeated mechanical stressors on disc will lead to onset of back ache^[3]. In this case, X-ray and MRI shows scoliosis, lumbar spondylosis and lumbar disc bulge. Richard Hughes agrees with Jahr that Rhus tox is the chief remedy for lumbago^[4]. Based on presenting symptoms, that is pain during rising, walking and relief from rest, Bryonia was given. But the constitutional remedy, Natrum mur relieved the pain, which shows the importance of mental symptoms while considering the Totality of Symptoms. Kent says that Ignatia only gives temporary benefits for symptoms in a mental state, whereas its chronic, Natrum mur should be given at once if there is any underlying constitutional state too deep for Ignatia^[5].

Presenting Complaints

A 72-year-old female was admitted at Govt. Homoeopathic Medical College Thiruvananthapuram on 18/04/2022 for aching type of pain in lower back extending downwards to both knee joints up to feet. Pain was aggravated by rising from sitting position, prolonged standing and walking. Got relief by rest and lying down. Pain was accompanied by cramps in both legs, difficulty in walking. Burning sensation in stomach, for one day. Also had abdominal discomfort that was aggravated after eating leafy vegetables and pulses and ameliorated by eructation.

History of presenting complaints

Complaint started as pain on lower back 20 years ago after a hit on the table. She had taken Ayurvedic treatment at that time. Got only temporary relief. As the pain reappeared, she underwent allopathic treatment for 1 year. Took MRI of cervical spine in 2003 and MRI Lumbosacral spine in 2014 that showed lumbar spondylosis. Now under Homeopathic treatment for 3 years.

History of past illness

Known to be hypertensive for 23 years under allopathic medication (Telma 20). Had measles and thereafter jaundice during childhood. Both were relieved by Homeopathic treatment.

Family History

No relevant family history of diabetes, hypertension, tuberculosis, cardiac disease etc.

Personal History**1) Life Situation**

- Place of birth: Kalady
- age/year of marriage: 21 years of age, 3 children
- Educational status: BCom
- Economic status: Good
- Social status: Good
- Occupational status: Retd. Bank officer
- nutritional status: good
- Marital status: Married

2) Habits and Hobbies

- Food: Non vegetarian
- Hobby: Reading books

3) Domestic Relations

With family members – good.

With other relatives – good.

With neighbors/ friends/colleagues- good.

Physical generals**Functionals**

Appetite: decreased.

Thirst: Increased.

Sleep: disturbed.

Eliminations

Stool: constipated

Urine: nothing particular

Sweat: increased

Reaction To

Desires: food/drinks- sweets, salt+++

Intolerance: food/drink - pulses, leafy vegetable causes flatulence

Mental Generals

Wants to be alone

Weeping tendency

Sad about the death of daughter

Religious

Menstrual History

Menarche - 16 years.

Menopause - 52 yrs.

Obstetric History: G4P3L3A1

Regionals: Eye/vision: dimness of vision

Physical examination

- **General examination**
- Built-well built
- Complexion-fair
- Anemia-not anemic
- Cyanosis-no Cyanosis
- Jaundice-not icteric
- Lymphadenopathy- no enlarged lymph node
- Clubbing-no clubbing
- Oedema- no oedema
- Swelling-no swelling

Systemic examination**Examination of spine****Inspection**

Attitude and deformity:

Level of shoulder- right shoulder dropped

Scoliosis with convexity towards left side

Gait: unsteady. Walks with more pressure on right leg

Swelling: No swelling.

Palpation

Tenderness present on lumbar region.

Swelling: no swelling.

Movements

SLR: Positive above 40degree on both sides.

PSLR: Positive above 40degree on both sides.

Lassegue'S Sign: Positive on both sides.

Femoral Nerve Stretch Test: Positive on both sides.

Gille's Test: Negative.

Genlsen's Test: Negative.

Naffziger's Test: Negative.

Pump Handle Test: Positive on both sides.

Numerical Totality

1. Pain in upper back extending downward to both knee joint up to the feet, aggravation from rising from sitting position, prolonged standing and walking. Amelioration by rest and lying down.
2. Cramps in both legs, difficulty in walking.
3. Burning sensation in stomach and abdominal discomfort.
4. Aggravation after eating leafy vegetables and pulses. Amelioration by eructation.
5. Wants to be alone,
6. Sad about the death of daughter, weeping nature.
7. Desires sweet, salt+++
8. Intolerance to - pulses, leafy vegetables
9. Eye/vision: dimness of vision
10. unsteady gait more pressure on right leg
11. Right shoulder dropped, scoliosis towards left side
12. Tenderness present on lumbar region.

Analysis of symptoms**Symptoms of disease**

- Pain in upper back extending downwards to both knee joins up to feet.
- Aching type of pain.
- Cramps in both legs, difficulty in walking.

Provisional Diagnosis

Lumbar spondylosis.

IVDP.

Differential Diagnosis

- Lumbosacral strain.
- Ankylosing spondylitis.

Investigation**1. X-Ray – Lumbar spine**



Fig 1: X-ray lower spine AP view

Fig 2: X Ray lower spine – lateral view

2. MRI – Lumbo Sacral Spine

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Report

Name	Remadevi	Date	17 November 2014
Age	63 Yrs	Time	4:15:12 PM
Sex	Female	PR No.	16354

MRI - LUMBOSACRAL SPINE

TECHNIQUE
Without IV contrast. T1W and T2W Sagittal and Axial. Sagittal STIR.

OBSERVATION

Scoliosis noted with convexity towards left.
Straightening of lumbar curvature is seen

Moderate degenerative changes in the form of marginal osteophytes, disc dessication, disc bulges, endplate changes and facet arthrosis seen

Type II modic endplate changes noted at L3-4.

L1-2: Disc dessication with reduced height. Mild diffuse annular disc bulge with thecal sac indentation. No significant neural foraminal stenosis.

L2-3: Disc dessication with reduced height. Mild diffuse annular disc bulge with thecal sac indentation. Mild bilateral neural foramina stenosis due to foraminal disc bulge.

L3-4: Disc dessication with reduced height. Moderate diffuse annular disc bulge with thecal sac indentation mildly impinging bilateral traversing nerve roots without significant compression. Moderate right and mild left neural foramina stenosis due to foraminal disc bulge and facet arthroses impinging right exiting nerve roots.

L4-L5: Disc dessication with normal height. No significant posterior disc herniation. Mild left neural foramina stenosis due to foraminal disc bulge and facet arthroses.

L5-S1: Disc dessication with normal height. Mild postero-central 3.4 mm disc bulge seen indenting thecal sac. Mild left neural foramina stenosis due to foraminal disc bulge and facet arthroses.

The spinal canal dimensions at various disc levels are as follows: -

L1-2	- 14.4 mm	L2-3	- 12.9 mm,	L3-4	- 12.5 mm.
L4-5	- 13.4 mm.	L5-S1	- 10.7 mm.		

Conus is normal.
Paravertebral soft tissues are normal.
Mild subchondral edema noted in bilateral sacroiliac joints- ? significant.

Cont.....d page 2

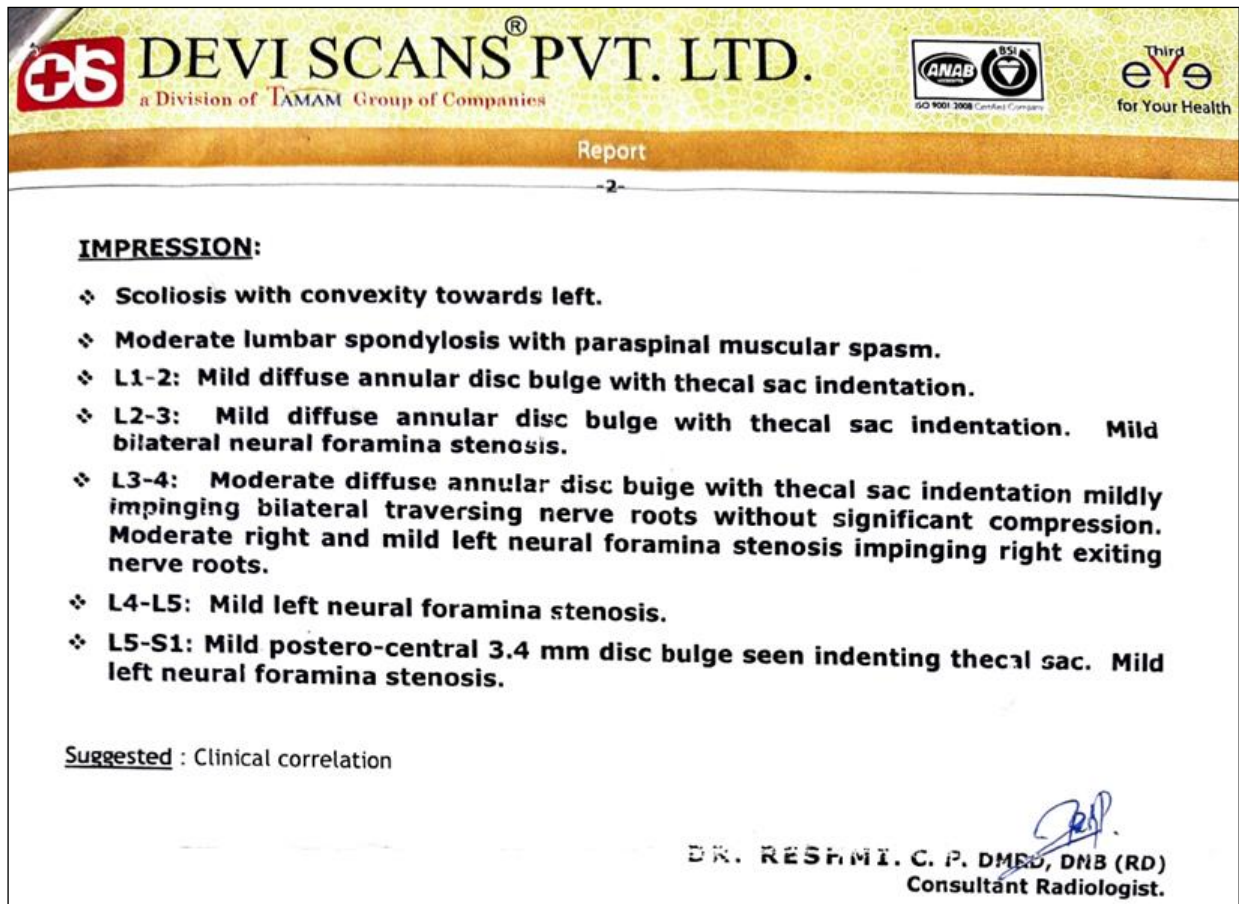


Fig 3: MRI report of lumbosacral spine

Final Diagnosis

1. Scoliosis with convexity towards left.
2. Lumbar spondylosis.
3. Intervertebral disc prolapses at L1-L2; L2-L3; L3-L4 and neural foramina stenosis at L4-L5.

Symptoms of patient**Generals**

- Wants to be alone, weeping tendency.
- Sad about the death of daughter.
- Desires sweet, salt+++
- Intolerance to - pulses, leafy vegetables cause gas trouble.

Particulars

- Pain in upper back extending downward to both knees join up to the feet, for 2 weeks. Aching type of pain, < rising from sitting position, prolonged standing, walking and is > from rest and lying down.
- Cramps in both legs, difficulty in walking.
- *Burning sensation in stomach and abdominal discomfort.
- < After eating leafy vegetables, pulses > eructation.
- Dimness of vision.
- Unsteady gait more pressure on right leg.
- Right shoulder dropped, scoliosis towards left side.
- Tenderness present on lumbar region.

Evaluation of symptoms

- Mental generals.
- Wants to be alone.

- Weeping tendency.
- Sad about the death of daughter.

Physical General

Desires sweet, salt+++

- Intolerance to - pulses, leafy vegetables that causes flatulence.

Particulars

- Pain in upper back extending downward to both knees join up to the feet, for 2 weeks. Aching type of pain, < rising from sitting position, prolonged standing and walking > by rest and lying down.
- Cramps in both legs, difficulty in walking.
- Burning sensation in stomach and abdominal discomfort.
- < After eating, leafy vegetables, pulses > eructation.
- Eye - dimness of vision
- Unsteady gait more pressure on right leg
- Right shoulder dropped, scoliosis towards left side.

Common Symptoms

- Pain from low back radiating downwards to both leg.
- Tenderness present on lumbar region.

Totality of symptoms

- Wants to be alone.
- Weeping tendency.
- Sad about the death of daughter.
- Desires sweet, salt++
- Intolerance to - pulses, leafy vegetables cause gas

trouble.

- Pain in upper back extending downward to both knees joint up to the feet. Aching type of pain, aggravation from sitting position, prolong standing walking. Amelioration by rest and lying down.
- Cramps in both legs, difficulty in walking.
- Burning sensation in stomach, <after eating leafy vegetables and pulses > by eructation.
- Dimness of vision.
- Unsteady gait more pressure on right leg.
- Right shoulder dropped, scoliosis towards left side.
- Tenderness present on lumbar region.
- Pain in back extending downwards to legs.

Medicines given

18/4/2022

Pain +++ from lumbar area radiating downwards

Colocynth 200/ 2D (1-0-1)

19/ 4/2022

Pain persists. Numbness+, cramps+

Bryonia 30/2D (1-0-1)

21/4/2022

No relief for pain

Rhus tox 30/2D (1-0-1)

22/4/2022

Symptoms persists

Natrum Mur 200/ 2D (1-01)

24/4/2022

Pain slight relief

Sac Lac 2 D (1-0-1)

28/4/2022

Pain >. No cramps, numbness >

10/5/2022

Pain >. With general wellbeing

Relieved and discharged

Discussion

This lady was admitted at Govt. Homoeopathic Medical College Thiruvananthapuram on 18/4/2022 for aching type of pain in lower back extending downwards to both knee joints up to feet. But Colocynth failed to relieve the pain. Pain was aggravated by rising from sitting, standing, walking and got relief by rest and lying down. Bryonia also doesn't relieved the pain. As pain was accompanied by cramps in both legs. Rhus tox, which is the complementary remedy of Bryonia was considered. In § 210 Hahnemann says that in corporeal diseases the condition of disposition and mind is always altered. In diseases, we are to cure the disposition along with the totality of symptoms. In order to treat Homoeopathy with success, we should trace accurate picture of disease ^[6]. § 225 says emotional causes like anxiety, worry, fear, fright etc. destroys the corporeal health very badly ^[6]. In § 227 insists antipsoric treatment as the fundamental cause is the psoric miasm in these cases ^[6].

In Natrum mur, the backache is relieved by lying on back, which is seen in Rhus tox also ^[7]. Weeping mood and always have a marked disposition to weep ^[8]. Shortening and twitching of muscles and limbs with painful contraction of hamstrings muscle are present in Natrum mur ^[9]. Hahnemann pathology says that, disease is always primarily a morbid dynamical or functional disturbance of the vital principle ^[10].

Conclusion

Lumbar spondylosis was successfully managed with Homoeopathic medicine Natrum mur, that was selected based on totality of symptoms, mainly considering the mental symptoms. Colocynth, Bryonia and Rhus tox even though seems indicated, doesn't relieved her symptoms.

Acknowledgement

Not available

Author's Contribution

Not available

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How to Cite This Article

Das BTR, Jintumol A, Shakira S. Homoeopathic management of lumbar disc prolapse with spondylosis: A case report. International Journal of Homoeopathic Sciences. 2023;7(1):419-423.

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