

Constipation and its Homoeopathic Treatment

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Abstract: Constipation is a common GIT issue, which causes great expenses of community worldwide and covers wide geographical variation. Chronic constipation is a complicated condition among older individuals which is characterised by difficult stool passage. In the regard, this condition has a close relationship with patient's quality of life and consuming health resources.

Keywords: constipation, homoeopathy and constipation, homoeopathy, hard stool

1. Definition

Constipation is a disorder in the gastrointestinal tract, which can result in the infrequent stools, difficult stool passage with pain and stiffness.

2. Introduction

It is worth noting that there is currently no ideal definition for constipation, thus history and physical examination can be considered the main initial approaches. Many definitions are described by using a self - reported constipation and formal criteria. Constipation is a common GIT issue, which causes great expenses of community worldwide and covers wide geographical variation. Chronic constipation is a complicated condition among older individuals which is characterised by difficult stool passage. In the regard, this condition has a close relationship with patient's quality of life and consuming health resources. Many definitions of constipation are related to scientific considerations such as secondary causes (medications), neurological or systemic diseases. However, it is considered primary or idiopathic.

A Pilot Study of Individualised Homeopathic Treatment of Chronic Constipation-

Individualised Homeopathic approach treated the participants as a totality and this was witnessed with a favourable progression in participant's psychological and physical symptoms of constipation, as well as an increased state of general wellbeing. Participants were consequently pleased with the improvements that had occurred.

Pathogenesis- is multifactorial with focusing on;-

- 1) Genetic predisposition
- 2) Socioeconomic factors
- 3) Low fiber consumption
- 4) Lack of fluid intake
- 5) Lack of mobility
- 6) Disturbance in hormonal balance
- 7) Side effects of medication
- 8) Anatomy of body etc

Prevalence of constipation-

The average prevalence of constipation in adults has been estimated as 16% worldwide whereas the prevalence of 33.5% was attributed to adults aged 60 to 110 years.

Epidemiological studies have revealed that high prevalence of chronic constipation is associated with age progression as far as we know.

Age and gender distribution-

Constipation in older people is far more common than younger people and common factors include;

- 1) Lack of normal bowel movements or aging
- 2) Lack of proper diet
- 3) Lack of adequate fluid intake
- 4) Lack of adequate physical activity
- 5) Illness or the use of drugs
- 6) Loose fitting dentures or tooth loss resulting in chewing difficulty which forces patient to select soft food.
- 7) Difficult swallowing due to health issues resulting in selection of low fibre foods.
- 8) Rectocele, pelvic floor dyssynergia and prolapse are highly reported in elderly.
- 9) More marked in elderly women than elderly males.
- 10) Pregnancy - especially in last months, the risk of constipation is high due to significant increase in sex hormones, a decreased intestinal movement and delayed emptying because of mechanical pressure.
- 11) Females- Fluctuations in hormones in menopausal times and feelings make females more prone to constipation.
- 12) Furthermore, more use of laxatives and seeking of medical care for constipation is more common in females.
- 13) Diet - Common cause of chronic constipation comprising of lack of nutritional and fibrous diet, lack of water and fluid intake. In these cases constipation is not a serious issue and can be rectified by correcting nutritional habits and lifestyles. High fiber diet can increase stool weight, result in decreased colon transit time, while poor fiber diet can induce constipation.
- 14) Diseases and conditions as secondary cause of constipation as follows-
 - Colon, rectal or anal stricture.
 - Megacolon rectocele
 - Intestinal pseudo obstruction
 - Injured tissues
 - Diverticulosis
 - Abnormal narrowing of the intestine or rectum
 - Organic stenosis- cancer or intestinal radiations
 - Diverticulitis
 - Sigmoid or cecal volvulus
 - Intestinal masses

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- Inflammatory, ischaemic or surgical stenosis.
- 15) Psychological conditions- like depression, anxiety or eating disease.
 - 16) Neurological disorders - multiple sclerosis, parkinson disease, stroke, paraplegia and autonomic neuropathy.
 - 17) Myopathic disorders- scleroderma and amyloidosis.
 - 18) Medications associated with constipation- some lipid lowering drugs, muscle relaxants, anti ulcer drugs, antioxidants (drugs containing aluminium and calcium)
 - 19) Opioid addicts
 - 20) Socioeconomic status and positive family history of constipation and living in densely populated society.

3. Diagnosis

- 1) Clinical presentation and evaluation- clinical evaluation including the frequency and consistency of stools, stool size and duration of symptoms, excessive obstruction and history of ignoring a call to defecate.
- 2) Pictorial representation of stool form based on Bristol stool form scale and bowel diaries have been indicated as a reliable technique for describing bowel habits which are promising predictor of colonic transit compared to self reported stool frequency.
- 3) CBC, urine and thyroid function tests
- 4) Endoscopy
- 5) Anorectal manometry
- 6) Barium enema

Treatment

Dietary fiber and laxatives

4. Homeopathic Medicines for Constipation

- 1) Nux Vomica - For Ineffectual Urging and Scanty Stool. It is one of the most effective medicines for constipation cases of insufficient stool with ineffectual urging. A person who needs prescribing Nux Vomica passes scanty stool, very frequently. The stool is unsatisfactory and insufficient. Even after passing stool many times a day, there is a never "got done" feeling. Abdomen pain may arise along with constipation. Nux Vomica is also a good choice of medicine for treating constipation in persons with a sedentary lifestyle. More importantly, it also effectively treats piles from constipation.
- 2) Bryonia Alba - For Dry, Hard, Stool in Lump Form for constipation with hard, dry stool that passes in lump form, Bryonia Alba is considered one of the best medicines for constipation. The stool is dry, as if burnt, and is passed with much difficulty. Abdominal distension is also noted in some cases. Headache from constipation may also be effectively treated with Bryonia Alba.
- 3) Alumina - For Constipation with No urge to Pass Stool for Days. Alumina is another well-known name on the long list of medicines for constipation. A guiding feature for the use of Alumina is the absence of the urge to pass stool for days together. The person needing Alumina will go days without passing stool. The intestine action is extremely sluggish. The stool is passed only when there is a large accumulation of fecal matter in the intestine. Another important symptom for

using Alumina is excessive straining to pass stool even when the stool is soft. Alumina is also one of the majorly indicated medicine for constipation in children, infants, bottle-fed babies and among elderly persons.

- 4) Lycopodium Clavatum - For Flatulence and Bloating, Lycopodium Clavatum works wonders in cases where constipation is attended with flatulence and a bloated abdomen. Lycopodium Clavatum is also the most helpful medicine for constipation in elderly people. It is very useful in irritable bowel syndrome as well.
- 5) Silicea - For Constipation where Stool Recedes after being Partially Expelled In some constipation cases, the stool is known to recede after being partially expelled. In such cases, Silicea is the most useful medicine for constipation. The stool is soft, needs straining to pass out, but recedes back into the rectum after being partially expelled. There is constriction of anus. Exhaustion attends straining efforts to pass stool. Burning, smarting pain at the anus may also arise. Constipation in women before and during menses makes another case of using Silicea.
- 6) Antimonium Crudum and Podophyllum Peltatum - Where Constipation and Diarrhea Alternate, Antimonium Crudum and Podophyllum Peltatum are two prominent medicines for constipation alternating with diarrhea. Antimonium Crudum is an effective medicine for constipation which treats soreness of rectum, anal itching, and mucus piles. It is extremely useful for alternating constipation and diarrhea in the elderly. Some unique features to look out for while prescribing medicine Podophyllum, apart from alternating constipation and diarrhea, are gurgling in bowels prolapse of the rectum with stool, clay-colored stool or greenish stool and highly offensive stool.
- 7) Aesculus Hippocastanum and Collinsonia Canadensis - For Constipation with Piles Aesculus Hippocastanum and Collinsonia Canadensis have shown the most remarkable recoveries in cases of constipation with piles. Aesculus Hippocastanum is a medicine for constipation advised in case of dry, hard, knotty stool with painful piles. There is a sensation of small sticks stuck in the rectum. Pain may worsen while walking. Aesculus Hippocastanum is useful for piles that are bleeding or blind type. A severe lower back ache attends piles complaints, which it also treats. The characteristic features to look out for using Collinsonia Canadensis are protruding piles with hard stool. Itching or constriction at the anus may also be noticed. The medicine for constipation is well indicated for constipation during pregnancy.
- 8) Ratanhia and Nitric Acid - For Anal Fissures with Constipation. These are well-recognized medicines for anal fissures with constipation. Ratanhia is more useful in case of anal fissure with burning pain and constriction at the anus while passing stool. The stool is passed with great effort and strain. Burning may continue for hours after stool is passed. Cold water application may relieve the burning pains. Nitric Acid is the choice where there is bleeding and pain while passing stool. The pain may be tearing, cutting or stitching in nature.

- 9) Natrum Mur - For Constipation when Stool is passed on Alternate Days, In cases where stool is passed on alternative days, Natrum Mur is what the doctor orders to regularise bowel movements. The attending features are constriction in the rectum, smarting, burning or tearing pain at the anus.
- 10) Opium and Chelidonium Majus - For Dry, Hard Stool in Ball Form, both work well in cases of constipation where the stool is hard, dry and passed in ball-like form. In addition, Opium is also the medicine for constipation where the person has been taking laxatives to pass stool for a long time.

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