

Family Medical History - A Cornerstone in Homoeopathic Prescription

Dr. Supriya Halder¹, Dr. Henna Khanam²

¹BHMS, MD (Hom.), Assistant Professor, Department of Anatomy, Pratap Chandra Memorial Homoeopathic Hospital & College, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

²BHMS, MD (Hom.), Assistant Professor, Department of Homoeopathic Materia Medica, Pratap Chandra Memorial Homoeopathic Hospital & College, Kolkata, West Bengal, India

Abstract: *Family histories were almost exclusively of interest to persons who had obtained their wealth or rank by inheritance till the late 19th century. Families have many factors common, including their genes, environment and lifestyle, habit. Together, these factors can give clues to medical conditions that may run in family. By noticing patterns of disorder among, relatives, healthcare professionals can determine whether an individual, other family members, or future generations may be at an increased risk of developing a particular condition. Thus, knowledge of family medical history helps to diagnose the disease & prevent increased risk of certain morbid disorder, particularly in homoeopathy it helps to ascertain the inherited constitution of patient, also helps in selection of a constitutional remedy for that particular condition.*

Keywords: Family history, Homoeopathy

1. What is family history? ^[1, 2]

Family is a social group comprising of all the people who are related to each other, including those who are now dead indeed.

History is the past events concerned in the development of a particular place, subject etc. So, from literary point of view, "family medical history" evolves a theme in relation with the past - medical events concerned in the development of a particular people, who are related to each other, including those who are not alive.

All human disease can be considered to result from an interaction between an individual's unique genetic makeup with the environment. Families have many factors common, including their genes, environment and lifestyle. Together, these factors can give clues to medical conditions that may run in family. By noticing patterns of disorder among, relatives, healthcare professionals can determine whether an individual, his/her other family members, or future generations may be at an increased risk of developing a particular condition. This can be elicited from gaining information about the three generations of relatives, including children, brother and sisters, parents, aunts and uncles, nieces, nephews, grandparents and cousins.

2. Homoeopathic concept regarding family history ^[1, 3, 4]

Modern medicine tends to emphasize more upon the patient's signs, presenting symptoms and pathological findings if any; to diagnose and treat a patient as they consider disease as the sum - total of structural & functional changes in the body caused by some infection of bacteria, parasite etc. So, they try to find out specific medicines for specific disease based on nosological diagnosis. But in homoeopathy, there is no specific remedy according to

nosological name of disease i. e. Homoeopathy does not treat disease, it treats patients.

Every diseased individual is also an individual unique; as there are no two persons ever alike, be in health or disease. Diseases also differ according to age, sex, constitution, temperament, manifesting symptoms, causation, modalities etc. And these differences, gives each case its individuality & create the need for an individual remedy. Master Hahnemann instructed that if the physician becomes well versed with what he is to cure in every individual case of disease before him or what is that in medicines which when given on the basis of individualization and how to adapt them in his clinical use then he can judiciously restore the patient back to health. And, for this kind of treatment purpose, we should explore the whole history of the patient, the internal cause (fundamental cause) as far as it is remembered, and the causes of the continuance of the ailments and all other significant information. The *internal cause* relates *the miasmatic background of the patient* which can be elicited from *past & family medical history* of the patient. Then only homoeopathic physician may carefully select a remedy covering similarity to effect cure as it is termed.

Even some time we can see that in spite of proper case taking & administration of indicated medicines in suitable potency, dose and repetition sometimes one may fail to obtain desired result - in such few cases, history of earlier events in life (past history) might point to a remedy. Even having a deep acting anti - miasmatic remedy with above perspective, a number of patients may not improve. In such cases notable disease or incidences in family having implication of miasms, unveils the bad knot in between disease & cure, i. e. obstacles in the way of recovery. So, to explore the fundamental causes in every chronic past & family history deserve special attention. It has been rightly said that in every conceivable manner, the family is a link to our past and a bridge to our future. We are often helped by getting a record of the family that is age of the parents,

Volume 11 Issue 7, July 2022

www.ijsr.net

Licensed Under Creative Commons Attribution CC BY

brothers and sisters - their general health, and cause of death, if deceased, thereby getting a good picture of hereditary tendency in this way. One of the most valuable diagnostic procedures that doctors can do free from risks, involving no advanced technology and costing only the time it takes is by asking pertinent questions related to the family history as part of the medical history.

3. Conditions where family medical history is important-

a) Determination of Individual Risks in Genetic Disease - [5]

The field of medical genetics has traditionally focused on chromosomal abnormalities and Mendelian disorders as it was found that - *genetic differences determine the ability of each individual to meet environmental challenges, including those that produce disease.* For example, about 5 - 10 percent of all breast & ovarian cancers are hereditary due to mutation of BRCA1/BRCA2 gene. Family history plays a significant role in assessing the risk of inherited medical conditions including Down syndrome, colon cancer, hemophilia, Atherosclerosis, Coronary artery disease, Bronchial asthma, Hypertension, Autoimmune disease, Type 2 Diabetes mellitus, Muscular

degeneration, Alzheimer’s disease, Psychiatric disorders, and disorders involve more than the ultimate expression of an illness; these genes can also influence the severity of infirmity, effect of treatment, and progression of disease. Genetic variation may alter disease susceptibility, severity, or response to therapy even. Therefore, family history can be a powerful screening tool which not only helps in early diagnosis of diseases, but also helps to in preventing those diseases by altering lifestyle & environment which plays an important role.

b) Family risks that may increase addictive tendencies & behavior disorder - [1, 6]

After various research it also identified that a parent who is actively suffering from substance abuse, drug abuse or alcohol - related disorder, which can be passed down to their children. For example, recent evidences indicates that as a group, children of alcoholic (COA’s) are at higher risk than non - COA’s for a number of psychological disorders in both childhood & adulthood and that they seems to be more impulsive and possibly more neurotic than people without alcohol parents.

c) Miasmatic interpretation of Family medical history – [3, 4]

George Vithoulkas defined that miasm as –*“a predisposition towards chronic disease underlying the acute manifestation of illness, which is transmissible from generation to generation. . ”* Master Hahnemann investigated that implication of miasms inherited through family history not only alters disease susceptibility, severity or response to therapy but also causes predispositions to certain disease syndrome. He also pointed out that alongside the modify influence of accessory circumstance; hereditary disposition is the most important conditioning factor in the expression of the miasm. The awakening of the internal Psora which has hitherto slumbered and been latent, and, as it were kept bound by a good bodily constitution and favourable external circumstances, as well as its breaking out into more serious ailments and maladies, is announced by the increase of the symptoms given above as indicating the slumbering Psora, also by a number less multitude of various other signs and complaints. These are varied according to the difference in the bodily constitution of a man, his hereditary disposition, the various errors in his education and habits, his manner of living and diet, his employment, his turn of mind, his mortality, etc.

• Diseases with their predominant miasm - [7]

Family History and/ or Incidence	Predominant Miasm
F/H of gonorrhoea, asthma, chronic or long continued inflammation specially of joints, eczema, ringworm, appendicitis, any cystic degeneration, any condylomatous growth - moles, warts, tumour/ tumours growth, leucorrhoea etc.	- SYCOSIS
F/H of Syphilis, TB, leucoderma, Defective information of bone, teeth. Family h/o azoospermia, sterility, immature death, cerebral attack, ulcer, suicidal tendency, cancer etc	- SYPHILIS
F/H of itch, nervous debility, hysteria, hypochondriasis, mania, melancholia, imbecility, madness, epilepsy & convulsion of all sorts, softening of the bones (rachitic), scoliosis and kyphosis, caries, cancer, fungus, haemorrhoids., nematodes, gout, etc,	- PSORA

F/H of pleurisy, tuberculosis, susceptibility of cold in parents indicates Tubercular diathesis (pseudo - psora). While a number of diseases in family such as goitre, tumour, cancer, DM, HTN and other diseases indicated mixed miasmatic background. Here past & family history both should be taken into consideration of miasmatic coverage of person and according to develop miasmatic state at the moment and anti - miasmatic treatment should be planned.

d) Significance of Gestational History – [8]

It includes mainly the history of mother during pregnancy - her mental as well as physical condition or the environment surrounding pregnancy which directly or indirectly affects her children. Any diseases condition like - toxemia, measles, chicken pox, tuberculosis, hyperemesis

gravidarum, epilepsy, skin disorder etc.; long continued emotional stress or history of injury during pregnancy or at the time of delivery may causes developmental abnormalities of child; example - prenatal exposure to maternal stress increased the risk of later development of schizophrenia in child.

Moreover, curative treatment is difficult in infants & very young children due to certain problems in case - taking; in such condition, positive family with paucity of sufficient characteristic symptoms is needed to select a remedy.

e) Tools for recording Family Medical History - [1, 3]

Family medical history is the systematic narrative and research of the past events relating to a specific family, or

specific families. The easiest way to get information on family medical history is to talk with relatives about their health, obtain which medical records and other documents can help to complete the family medical history in details.

In the domain of Genealogy the way to record a family history is done by drawing a family tree called a “pedigree”. We can also create & keep a written list of this information. Either way, simply by asking the patient & writing down the medical & health information about family members in detail reveals relevant information about family medical history. We should enquire about diseases and/or incidences in family -

- Parents (mother & father)
- Grandparents, uncle and aunts (paternal and maternal)
- Cousins & nephews (paternal and maternal)
- Spouse and Children etc.
- Age of suffering for all family members, and who have passed away, age of death and cause of death is to be noted also.

So in order to rationally understand the anamnesis of an individual sickness, the detailed study of familial tree assumes most important. In order to perceive a case holistically, a physician must ask specifically about the various diseases like diabetes, hypertension, thalassemia, carcinoma, skin or mental disorder etc. He must enquire about any tendency such as for alcoholism, smoking, tooth

decay, susceptibility to cold etc. And parental history suffering sexually transmitted disease such as gonorrhoea or syphilis (if not co-operated by the parents) – these private questions usually should not be asked directly; it is only possible to elicit them during second or third visit. He must also enquire about the age of the death of the family members, age & other accessory circumstances with the onset of disease in family.

Prescribing tips with some notable Family Medical History^[9,10]

Notable diseases like T. B., haemorrhoids, suicidal tendency, [Sycosis, Syphilis] etc. in family having miasmatic implications to the offspring & also have manifestations similar with a remedy as per totality like other constitutional remedies; and if it is not similar to a particular remedy, but apparently indicated on symptomatic basis, yet it helps in further improvement.

There are different hereditary nosodes like - Bacillinum, Tuberculinum, Syphilinum, Medorrhinum, Carcinosis, Psorinum etc.; these medicines either indicated as constitutional medicine, or as a hereditary block remover.

Some clinical suggestions on Importance of Family History/ Tendencies -

Family History and/ or Incidence	Medicine Suggested
1) F/H of gonorrhoea, rheumatic disorders, bronchial asthma in children, tumour, warts, angina and heart attack, if mother suffered from chronic pelvic inflammatory disorder like salpingitis, oophoritis etc	- Medorrhinum
2) Any type of allergic disorders, mother suffered from toxæmia (pre - eclampsia/ eclampsia), hypertension, oedema, obstinate vomiting during pregnancy, suppression of skin disorders, thyroid disorder during pregnancy or any metabolic disorder during pregnancy e. g. – Gestational Diabetes mellitus etc.	- Thyroidinum
3) F/H of Grave or obstinate psoric skin diseases, Psoriasis, Ichthyoids, Eczema, typhoid, hay fever or any functional disorders in the family etc.	- Psorinum
4) F/H of Syphilis, Insanity, Abortion, Azoospermia, Sterility, Birth of mentally handicapped children, suicidal deaths, early degenerative or destructive diseases. Dwarfed children with family h/o TB	- Syphilinum
5) H/O Contraceptive pills	- Folliculinum

The table given above is just for ready reference but indiscriminate use of above mentioned medicines without giving due considerations to phenology of development of diseases may complicate the case and may even lead to incurable stage. A history of venereal disease, although this is exceptional, should be enquired into - enquire about cancer, tuberculosis and diabetes as a strong family history of one or more of these suggest consideration of Carcinosis. Occasionally there is a family history of alcoholism, which suggests consideration of Leuticum. A case of uterine disorder which was cured with Agaricus given on basis of aching in the heels and marked family tendency to spinal meningitis.

4. Conclusion

Thus we may conclude that a through exploration of family history in its various details should be an inherent part of retrospective case study in order to perceive the evolution of sickness for purpose of individualization.

References

- [1] Basu B. An illustration on Importance of Family History - .2nd ed. Kolkata: Dr. Shipra Basu; 2013.
- [2] Harrison T, Kasper D. Harrison's principles of internal medicine.17th ed. New York: McGraw - Hill Medical Publ. Division; 2015.
- [3] Hahnemann S. Organon of medicine.5th and 6th ed. combined translated by R. E. Dudgeon, William Boericke 26th impression. New Delhi: B. Jain; 2010. ISBN: 978 - 81 - 319 - 0311 - 7
- [4] Speight P. A study course in homoeopathy. Bradford: Health Science Pr; 1979.
- [5] Nuel G, Lefebvre A, Bouaziz O. Computing Individual Risks Based on Family History in Genetic Disease in the Presence of Competing Risks. Computational and Mathematical Methods in Medicine.2017; 2017: 1 - 14.
- [6] Bevilacqua L, Goldman D. Genes and Addictions. Clinical Pharmacology & Therapeutics.2009; 85 (4): 359 - 361.
- [7] Allen J. The chronic miasms. New Delhi: B Jain Publishers Pvt Ltd; 1998.

- [8] Maternal and newborn health [Internet]. Unicef. org.2022 [cited 14 July 2022]. Available from: [https://www.unicef.org/health/maternal - and - newborn - health](https://www.unicef.org/health/maternal-and-newborn-health)
- [9] Allen H. Key notes and characteristics with comparisons of some of the leading remedies of the materia medica with bowel nosodes.8th ed.15th impression. Noida: B. Jain; 2016. ISBN: 978 - 81 - 319 - 0124 - 3.
- [10] Julian O. Julian's materia medica of nosodes with repertory. B Jain; 2003.