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MENINGITIS

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Due to the recent spate of meningitis cases it is time for me to write about Meningitis –its common symptoms and Homeopathic treatment. Meningitis is highly infectious and appears regularly in the community despite the vaccinations which are usually given to children. With a few well known Homeopathic remedies symptoms can be alleviated before medical aid arrives and indeed can be given alongside orthodox medical treatment quite safely. Meningitis is more common in children than in adults, but symptoms are common to all age groups.

Signs and symptoms

Sudden onset.

Headaches

Vomiting

High Fever

Neck stiffness

Photophobia or aversion to bright light –the patient wants the room darkened.

Pulse variable-may be faster or slower.

Shrill high pitched screams may occur.-‘cri cerebrale ’or ‘cri encephalique’

Cerebra/meningeal cry

Initially irritable –resents being touched.

Drowsiness then follows-eyes take on staring expression and the pupils may be unequal and sluggish in reaction to light.

If you suspect that this is the case a simple test can be done by drawing the curtains and switching the light on and off to see if the pupils are reacting equally.

A squint may also develop and may remain after the meningitis is over.

Occasionally fits occur-these are a serious sign..

As irritation of spinal meninges increases and the muscles of the neck become involved, head retraction and backward arching of the back results known as opisthotonos.

Breathing difficulties develop known as Cheyne-Stokes breathing. Irregular respiration at first shallow, then increasing in depth till a maximum is reached, when it decreases again until imperceptible and a pause ensues ,during which breathing is absent,

Usually a bad sign, and due to a poor supply of oxygen to that part of the brain containing the respiratory centre.

As the illness progresses generalized septicaemia or blood poisoning may set in and the skin takes on a grey colour and feels cold and clammy. The pulse rate increases and feels weak. The blood pressure falls. At this point constipation and retention of urine can occur.

In infants and children the soft spot or fontanelle on the crown of the head will be tense and bulging indicating raised inter cranial pressure.

Lumbar puncture will be performed to confirm diagnosis and the cause of the disease to ascertain which antibiotics will be most suitable

In most instances complete recovery may be expected but fatalities do occur. Prompt effective treatment is of the essence and here is where Homeopathy can really help.

Common remedies are :

Arnica Montana :

As always Arnica prevents shock and stress from undermining the human organism. It helps the fever and the infection and rebalances the organism and rebalances it so that the healing process can start. The patient does not want to be approached or touched Assists in the initial stages and may be give throughout the illness.

Belladonna:

These patients have a bright red face and radiant heat can be felt coming from them. For high fevers and delirium. Prevents the illness from getting too entrenched, and developing fits. Indicated when the fever is high ,the pupils are dilated, and the patient confused. They can bite, spit and bark in their delirium. As with Arnica there is fear of approach and of being touched.

Apis Mel:

Again for high fever and a rosy red appearance of the face. These are the patients with the cerebral high pitched cry –often seen boring their head into the pillow. Confused and out of touch with reality. The colour of the face as distinct from Belladonna will give the indication for this remedy.

Hypericum:

This remedy is for the pressure on the spinal cord and will help relieve the tension in the cerebral and spinal meninges.

Carbo Veg:

“The Corpse Reviver” Carbo Veg supports the respiratory and circulatory systems of the body and restores oxygen flow into the tissues of the body thus preserving life. Without oxygen the tissues die and life cannot be sustained. The patient has difficulty breathing, is a poor colour and wants to be fanned so that enough air can enter the lungs. They appear to be in a state of collapse.

China.

For profound loss of body fluids and clinical shock caused by the loss of body fluids whether it be by diarrhea vomiting sweating or bleeding. These patients appear weak ,very pale and shocked with dark circles under the eyes. Will greatly assist recovery if given throughout the illness.

Dosage

Remedies should be given as indicated above at the first sign of the appropriate symptom. It can then be continued regularly until this symptom disappears. It is appropriate to give several remedies at the same time if this matches up to the symptom picture.

Remedies may be given in the front of the lower front teeth behind the lip and in front of the gum. Once they have touched the inside of the mouth the remedy is absorbed and it does not matter if it is vomited or spat out as reaction will already have started.

Remedies may be safely given before medical aid arrives and alongside orthodox treatment once the patient is in hospital.

Cases.

1. Adult male in 30's. This patient had a severe dose of flu and went to bed for the early evening. His wife went to see to him an hour later and was shocked to find him unrousable and feverish. She was a trained nurse and called the GP and ambulance then phoned me. Advised Arnica every 5 minutes –no other remedies in the house at the time. After first dose the patient opened his eyes and asked her what she was doing there, turned over and went to sleep in a normal fashion. She accompanied him to hospital and continued to administer the Arnica every 1/2 hour and he continued to improve. 2 other males of a similar age were admitted that night, all 3 diagnosed with viral meningitis and both died. Alex survived and went home after a week fully restored to health and an active life.
2. Child 6/12. Mother of 6 children recognized her son as having possible symptoms of meningitis and took him directly to the local children's hospital where he was admitted and given a lumbar puncture and a drip set up immediately. Diagnosis confirmed and antibiotics commenced with no improvement. Dark red spots appeared on the body after 24 hours and the doctors advised that he was terminal. Mother came to me and given Arnica and Belladonna to be given every 5 minutes. The doctors agreed to write up the remedies on the drug sheet at her insistence. The child went to sleep normally after the first remedies, slept all night and made an excellent recovery. The following day at the ward round the doctors agreed it was a coincidence and the nurses asked where they could train to be Homeopaths ! This child is now 16 years old and perfectly normal
3. Child 2 years of age visiting in my home town was later that day diagnosed with meningitis and taken to Guy's Hospital London (my training hospital as a nurse) The child developed severe symptoms and the mother was told that he would have to have both feet and possibly lower legs amputated as septicaemia and gangrene had set in. This was a very sudden swift and severe form of meningitis. Remedies were sent with the father to London and the child survived with the loss of one foot only and is now in good health with a prosthetic foot which he has no problem with and walks runs and plays normally. The remedies were again given with the consent of the doctors and written up on the drug sheet.
4. 18/12 old baby diagnosed by GP over the telephone with probable meningitis on description from mother an experienced social worker. GP on his way to case but trapped in traffic and not able to get to the patient for another 1/2 hour. Mother phoned me in desperation as child had head thrown back with rigid spine, eyes rolled up in the head and offensive bright yellow diarrhoea streaming out. Very high fever and child 'roasting' to touch. Mother advised to give Arnica and Belladonna every 5 minutes until the GP arrived. 1/2 hour later the child had fallen into a normal sleep, the fever was well down and the child was in a normal relaxed position. The GP was informed of what had

taken place and was very relieved that something was able to be done in his absence. This child is now in her early 20's and has recently had a child of her own.

5. University student 19 admitted to Hospital with suspected meningitis .She was transferred to the Intensive care unit as she was so seriously ill. Her mother, a patient of long standing, phoned from the hospital to ask for advice –she only had Arnica with her as she carried it in her handbag routinely. Advised to put in the mouth in front of the lower teeth as daughter unconscious and being monitored frequently by nursing staff. Mother also did Reiki healing .24 hours later she became conscious and made a full recovery, successfully completing her University degree.

As can be seen the use of Arnica is fundamental in dealing with any stress/trauma to the body. If it is the only remedy you ever keep make sure it is Arnica! It's facility to rebalance the physical emotional mental and spiritual levels of the body will always start the healing process and very often complete it without any other remedy. It also facilitates the action of further indicated remedies making them more effective in my experience.

This highlights the importance of educating patients-the availability of remedies in the home and the availability of the practitioner.

Nursing measures

Put the patient in a quiet well aired room ,preferably darkened to minimize stimulus. A fan might be a good idea. He/she will need sponging down with a tepid sponge. Cleansing of the mouth with wet cloths is very comforting and fluids should be encouraged in small quantities to keep the patient hydrated. It is a good idea to keep the lips moist with petroleum jelly or Vaseline as often they can become dry and cracked in high fever. As the patient recovers the diet should be light and nutritious and presented attractively. It is sensible to give the patient what he actually likes especially in the case of children! Bowels and urine output should be observed and notes kept of regularity colour and odour of both, usually 4 hourly. Any change in the patient's condition should be written down and careful notes kept of progress.