

Homeopathy and Haematidrosis – A Case of *Calcarea phosphorica*

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Homœopathic Links

Abstract

Keywords

- ▶ haematidrosis
- ▶ homeopathy
- ▶ *Calcarea phosphorica*

Haematidrosis is a rare disorder characterised by extravasation of blood from intact skin. Most reported cases are in the paediatric age group. We present here a case of haematidrosis in a 9-year-old boy treated with individualised homeopathic remedy selected according to the approaches of the contemporary authors of classical homeopathy. The result was a physical and mental improvement in a 3-year follow-up.

Introduction

Haematidrosis (or haematohidrosis, or haematofolliculohidrosis) is a very rare clinical condition in which the patient has bloody sweat. Only few reports can be found in the literature. A review article on the topic found 36 published cases of this disorder, most frequently in the paediatric age group; 83% of these cases were individuals aged 18 years old or younger; and among those, most were girls. The most common bleeding sites are face, eyes, ears and hands; but most cases had multiple bleeding sites. It is a benign condition; there are no health complications in patients with this diagnosis.¹

The pathophysiological explanation for this phenomenon is the rupture of blood vessels which are present in a net-like form around the sweat gland. Under pressure of stress, the blood goes into the sweat glands, which push it along with sweat. But the precise mechanism still needs to be elucidated.²

Psychosomatic disorders are believed to induce bleeding. The most frequent cause is the stress generated by intense fear, for example, expectation of execution, fear of bombings in the second world war, panic due to storm on the high seas, fear of sexual assault or chronic stress.²

The diagnosis is clinical and laboratory tests are normal. The therapeutic options for haematidrosis are medication (β -blockers, anxiolytics, antidepressants), psychotherapy and tap water iontophoresis (mild electrical currents in body parts submerged in water, which is also used in hyperhidrosis).¹

Being a medical system for treating physical and mental conditions, homeopathy can also be used in this rare condi-

tion. According to the characteristics of the patient, the classical homeopath selects a single medicine that aims to cure the altered state. Recent advances in methodologies for case analysis have given homeopaths new instruments that facilitate the selection of the best individualised medicine.³

Case Presentation

A 9-year-old boy presented with haematidrosis.

First homeopathic medical consultation:

Mother: 'He bleeds from the chest as if sweating blood. He feels a stitch, it's not a wound, it's not bruise. The blood comes out straight from the skin. It's pink blood, almost red. This started 4 months ago. Also urine with blood. Sometimes it's every day, it's more in the morning and at night. He spends more time with his grandmother. People suspected that the grandmother had hurt him'.

Boy: 'They told me it's voodoo'.

Mother: 'He has already bled at school, the first few times it was at school. We took him to the emergency room, all tests have been done, everything was normal'.

Grandmother: 'He is very nervous, he fights with us, curses and hits us. He says that he doesn't like to stay where his mother lives'.

Boy: 'There are boring friends there'.

Grandmother: 'Near his mother's house his friends teased him, they wanted to hit him. When he moved from his mother's house to his grandmother's house, he didn't bleed anymore, but when he returns to his mother's house he starts bleeding again'.

Mother: 'He is shy, very shy, doesn't make a mess. Teachers praise him, they say he's a good student, but he doesn't learn. He is well behaved. He is afraid of being alone, afraid of the dark, afraid of dogs, of any dog and cat. When it happens to bleed his chest it happens out of nowhere. He could be playing and suddenly he is bleeding. When his father is at home he does not bleed. When the father works, he bleeds. He is agitated, fights, curses, says he wants to kill; he hits his sister. He doesn't fight at school, but he's already hit a friend on the street, he said he was going to kill somebody. He says he misses his aunt who died'.

Grandmother: 'His mother had a seizure problem; he is very worried about his mother'.

More information:

He has a habit of biting nails.

In sleep he makes noises as if he is chewing. He talks in his sleep. He's sleepwalking.

Perspiration on the back, no smell.

Cravings: cake, pasta, pepper. Very thirsty for cold water. He took a long time to get out of diapers.

He is afraid of people who come close to him. But someone has to stay by his side for him to sleep.

Dreams: kites; win branded sneakers. He dreamed of someone killing his father.

He is very afraid of something happening to the family.

He is worried, calls home every day.

He fights with his sister, but he likes her.

He is agitated, he likes kites and balls.

Grandmother reports that she saw the child bleeding inside the car while they were going to the mother's house.

The boy has been facing problems at school due to his clinical condition: with the almost daily bleeding, his clothes are stained with blood and the other children turn away from him (► Fig. 1).



Fig. 1 Patient's bloody sweating from the chest. (Picture taken by the patient's mother.)

Analysis

Symptoms:

- Biting nails
- Perspiration, bloody
- Urine, bloody
- Talk during sleep
- Somnambulism
- Desire cold drinks
- Fear of dogs

► Fig. 2

The tendency to haemorrhage, compassion, agitation, hypersensitivity, the desire for cold drinks, all these symptoms are well-known in homeopathy: physical, general, and mental characteristics point to the well-known remedy *Phosphorus*.

First Prescription: *Phosphorus* LM 3

After a few months and several potency changes, the picture remained the same: the bleeding continued. For a long time, the family did not bring the boy to consultations. After 3 years, they come back with the same complaint.

Re-evaluation:

'He bleeds from the scalp, chest, and fingertips. He continues to sleepwalk. He talks in his sleep, screams in sleep. Desire for pepper and ice cream. Afraid of dogs, even small dogs, he's afraid of everything'.

Prescription: *Phosphorus* was again prescribed with no results.

Reassessing the case, the boy's characteristics were considered from the perspective of themes and not just symptoms. Could it be that what seemed to point to *Phosphorus* actually pointed to the *Phosphoricum* group? We are looking for a drug from the *Phosphorus* family, but it wasn't *Phosphorus*. According to Scholten,⁴ the themes of the *Phosphoricums* are:

- Communication
- Sympathy
- Friends, neighbours
- Homesickness
- Language, Learning
- Restlessness and fears
- Curiosity and travel

Apart from the last one, all the others appeared in our clinical case: desire and aversion for company; compassion for mother and family; problems with friends and neighbours; miss grandma's house; learning problems; agitation; fear of everything.

In a new repertorisation, using only three symptoms, we have found a member of the *Phosphoricum* group: *Calcarea phosphorica* (*Calc-p*):

- Shrieking during sleep
- Biting nails
- Desire pepper

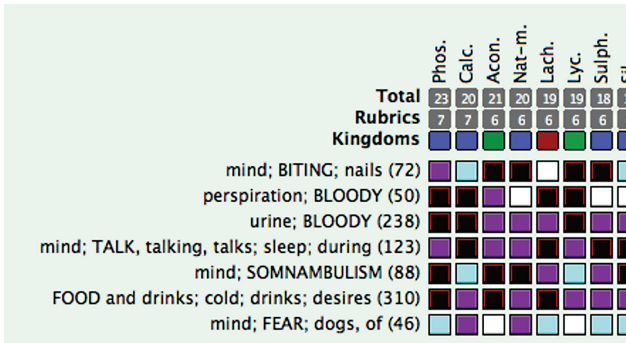


Fig. 2 First repertorisation. Mac Repertory 8.5.3.4.

►Fig. 3

Interesting: The two medications that covered the case in the first analysis (►Fig. 2) were *Phosphorus* and *Calcarea*.

Reading about *Calc-p* in Lamothe⁵: ‘An unstable picture full of contradictions; incompatible mixture of 2 opposites: *Phosphorus* and *Calcarea*, horizontality and verticality, instability and stability, audacity and inhibition, nervousness and indolence, precocity and delay, need for independence and affective greed’.

This mixture of contradictions of which the French homeopath speaks can be seen in these excerpts: on one hand ‘He is shy, very shy, doesn’t make a mess; teachers praise him, they say he’s a good student; he is well behaved’; and on the other hand ‘he doesn’t learn; he is very nervous, he fights with us, curses and hits us; he is agitated, fights, curses, says he wants to kill’.

Prescription: *Cal-p* 30C; one dose.

Follow-Up

See ►Table 1

Discussion

Haematidrosis is such a rare condition that, in this report, the paediatrician, the haematologist and the hospital doctors did not know how to manage this case.

The patient was referred to homeopathy by his paediatrician because he was unaware of other therapeutic options; the evaluation of the haematology service was requested, but they did not want to follow up the patient, claiming that there is no haematological pathology associated with this symptom; in a previous hospitalisation, the problem was misinterpreted as domestic violence. Psychotherapy was recommended but the family did not seek this type of treatment.

Thus, the homeopath has an advantage over his colleagues in conventional medicine: as homeopathic treatment is not based on pathological diagnoses, the homeopath can follow any type of patient, always looking for the individualised medicine according to the symptoms of the entire picture, both mental and physical.

No changes were made to the patient’s living conditions, there was no change in housing issues (which seemed to be one of the stressors), the patient did not receive any allopathic medication and no type of psychological care was provided following the family’s wishes.

In this report, we found several points that agree with the findings of the literature review: young patient, the diagnosis of haematidrosis was clinical, the exams were all normal, (including all blood tests) presence of stressful emotional factors, multiple bleeding sites. Intense fear – mentioned in the literature review as one of the most frequent factors to trigger this type of bleeding – is present in this case and is one of the characteristic homeopathic themes of remedies that have *Phosphorus* in their composition.

The most famous citation of this clinical condition is present in the Holy Bible when Jesus Christ sweat blood in the Garden of Gethsemane before his passion:

‘And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground’.^{4,6}

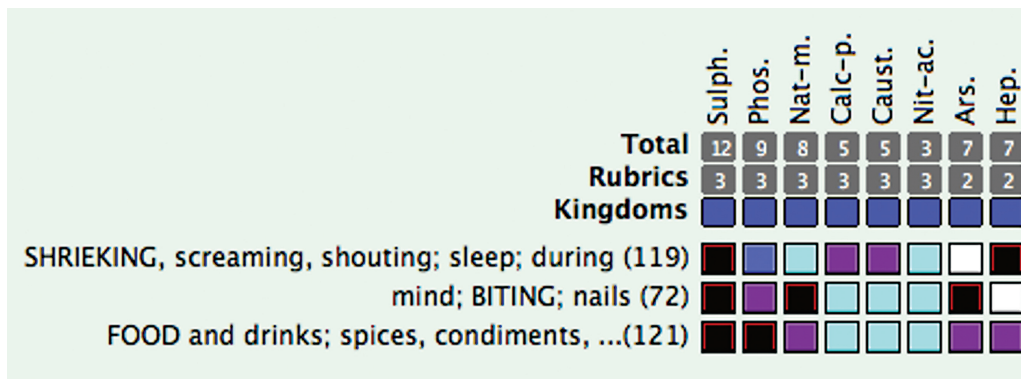


Fig. 3 Second repertorisation. Mac Repertory 8.5.3.4.

Table 1 Patient follow-up after Calc-p

| Time | Symptoms | Treatment |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| After 1 month | He had less bleeding; he no longer screamed in his sleep | <i>Calc-p</i> 30 C; one dose every 15 days |
| After 6 months | There was little bleeding. It was only 5 times in 6 months. In the last month, he has not had any bleeding. Decreased sleepwalking | <i>Calc-p</i> 30 C; one dose every 15 days |
| After 10 months | He had urinary bleeding for 2 weeks. Bleeding through the skin only occurred twice in these last 4 months. 'Before this remedy he used to bleed every day' | <i>Calc-p</i> 200; one dose |
| After 1 year and 4 months | There was no bleeding for 3 months. Now his sleepwalking has increased and he is screaming during sleep again | <i>Calc-p</i> 200; one dose |
| After 1 year and 9 months | After a total of 7 months without bleeding, now he presented one episode of chest and urine bleeding. Sleepwalking decreased, now he just sits and talks sometimes during sleep | <i>Calc-p</i> 1M; one dose |
| After 2 years and 1 month | He had a mild bleeding in the chest just 1 day in the last 4 months. He had no bleeding in urine. Improved sleep. Attends school normally, no problems with friends | <i>Calc-p</i> 1M; one dose per month |
| After 3 years | No bleeding in the last 11 months | <i>Calc-p</i> 1M; one dose per month |

Therefore, here too we see the same themes related to haematidrosis: intense fear, apprehension, expectation of execution, anguish.

In Sankaran,⁷ we find the same word *anguish* as one of the keywords to describe the elements of the 15th column of the periodic table of elements where *Phosphorus* is located and *Arsenicum* – one of the best-known medicines in the symptom: Fear of Death.

According to Scholten, elements of this column present the themes of 'loss' and 'death':

'They feel desperate because they have to quit. They feel everybody is letting them down: people they thought they could trust suddenly don't support them any longer. It is as if they have to face everything alone, like somebody who is facing a terrible loss, who feels that the whole world is against him, that nobody is there to support him'.⁸

In this case, the selection of characteristic symptoms and their study in the repertory always led to the same medicine: *Phosphorus*. This is one of the most common criticisms against the traditional process of using the repertory in homeopathy: lists of symptoms almost always lead to the prescription of so-called polychrests – well-known drugs and therefore very frequent in practice.³

At a certain point in the follow-up, we began to analyse the case with a broader perspective. This was a turning point in the case. Indeed, it was a turning point for classical homeopathy. This is the study method of many contemporary authors. The homeopathic methodology has evolved from a technique based on symptoms to another based on a system

of recognition of themes and classification into groups. We start from the general to reach the specific, that is, we do not look directly for the specific medication in the repertory, but first we approach a group of possible medications according to the themes of the case. Thus, the repertory is used in a second moment to find a member of the group of remedies that have the patient's themes.³

In the case here reported, after the individualised homeopathic remedy (*Calc-p*), there was a decrease in bleeding episodes, from an almost daily frequency to isolated episodes several months apart. In addition, there was an improvement in other complaints such as sleepwalking.

Conclusion

Individualised homeopathic treatment proved to be effective in a rare clinical condition for which conventional medicine physicians were unaware of other therapeutic options and for which further research is needed.

Contemporary methodologies of classical homeopathy – case analysis in a broad perspective through the study of themes and classification into groups – are useful tools in the search for the most appropriate homeopathic medicine.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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THIEME