

Nux moschata – a remedy for Sjogren’s disease and narcolepsy

Summary

A 56-year-old lady with Sjogren’s disease is treated with Nux moschata in ascending LM potencies. She also has various symptoms of episodes of altered consciousness resembling narcolepsy.

Keywords

Sjogren’s disease, dry mouth, altered consciousness, Nux moschata

First Consultation 10 August 2005

Angela is a 56-year-old lady. She brings a bottle of water and often drinks.

“I have had Sjogren’s disease for over 15 years. It was diagnosed as Sjogren’s disease in December 2004 but I have had problems for many years before diagnosis. I have dry eyes, get dizzy, have neck pain and pains in my joints. I had a crown replaced on a front tooth earlier this year and have been worse since. ...¹ I feel my jaw wobbles, I lisp and I have odd feelings in the left side of my face.

... I feel tired all the time. I feel disorientated – like a fog in my brain and I feel light-headed.

... I have dryness in my eyes, throat, skin, vagina and I have a dry cough with choking. I have irritable bowel syndrome which is better with a special diet. My life feels like a rollercoaster – I never know how I will be from one day to the next.

... I push myself through life even though I am ill. ... I feel flu-like sometimes and have to go to bed because it is hard to stand. I sleep poorly and wake unrefreshed. I ache more in the mornings. ... I am much worse in a cold wind and if I become chilled.

... I get tingling and twitching legs. I have so many variable symptoms and I get anxious and afraid. I feel as if a gremlin is living inside me or as if there is some switch inside which just switches on different symptoms. ... I feel lost – the loss of myself.

... When I was 38 I was diagnosed with a pre-cancerous lesion of the cervix and had laser treatment and a big biopsy, and then at 40 I had haemorrhoids and my GP found a lump in my abdomen which moved about. Surprisingly I was not anxious about this but my GP was so I had a laparotomy. Afterwards I had a bad chest infection and had lots of antibiotics and after that I have never been well. ... When I was 41 my mother had a severe CVA and I was told that she was going to die but she survived. My father has always been difficult. I moved my parents to a house next door so I could help care for my mother. I had three children – the youngest was only five and I never stopped. My mother needed full-time help and I was always at my father’s beck and call. My mother had lots of other strokes and I was often told she would die and she didn’t. Ten years ago my father was diagnosed with dementia and after that life was a nightmare. I got totally exhausted. My father finally died when he was 93.



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... I was one of three children. I was the youngest child and was bullied at school. There were lots of deaths in the family and my mother was caring for elderly relatives and I was so worried all the time and got an eating disorder and depression. I graduated from university and then had another six years of extreme anxiety. ... I just cope and carry on to extremes. I carry on to a point well beyond my level of endurance and then collapse.

... I feel disorientated – as if I am in a capsule and everything is moving around me. ... I feel isolated from others. ... I feel as if I am on a boat on water and life is carrying on around me and without me – the boat keeps still and they are all busy and moving around but I am on the wobble boat and I am in slow motion. When I am disorientated I seem to walk a bit to the left and I always have neck pain.

... I faint quite a lot. ... I just seem to slither down the chair. I can’t concentrate and feel odd. I don’t seem to completely pass out – I am sort of aware a little of what is around me. The next day I have to go to bed as my legs just don’t work and I get minor recurrences for the next two days. ... I have been collapsing and fainting like this for so many years but it has been bad for the last two weeks. I have been put on Betahistine and have taken it for a week.

... I get constipated and bloated with wind. It is as if everything gets plugged up and my bowels come to a standstill. ... It is worse for coconut and food additives. ... I hate all forms of offal and red meat. I like fruit and vegetables and beans and salad and yoghurt. I need to eat bran or I get constipated. ... In the last two weeks I have had a craving for smoked mackerel. ... I am always thirsty and have carried water everywhere for years.

... My energy varies from 15-50/100. I am worse every February and March. ... I am very chilly but also worse from extreme heat. Cold makes me feel terrible and feel better from warmth and better in warm sunshine. I am terrible in a cold wind and if I become cold and chilled and am worse on wet or foggy days. I am better in dry heat. I get cystitis more in winter.

... As a child I was always afraid of my father. When I was five or six my mother went into hospital for a big

operation and I was not allowed to visit her – I thought she had died. My father took me out occasionally and then I was left with relatives for three weeks. I was sent to boarding school when I was 12 and I hated it. I begged to come home. ... I just had to get through it. The teachers didn't like me. I wept every night for a year. After that I made a good friend and it was better. ... I was not allowed to go to art school by my father and so I just shut art completely out of my life.

... I got married when I was 27 and had three children. In my late teens I developed an eating disorder and I was on the oral contraceptive pill so my menses stopped. I didn't know I was pregnant for 14 weeks till my baby was moving. ... My father died of dementia at 93. My mother had osteoarthritis and then lots of strokes from 73 and eventually died at 80. I am like my mother and we were very close. My father was frightening and had awful moods. He would become mute for weeks at a time. He was very black and white – everything had to be right. He was a high-flyer and didn't want his children to outshine him.

... I had my menopause three years ago. I used to get more symptoms around the time of menses. ... I am like my mother – I keep the peace all the time... because it is easier that way. ... Eventually my need for art has come out. I make piggy banks and design greeting cards and sell them, and I design and make clothes for teddy bears and dolls. I sing in a choir and I play piano. ... I am terrified of snakes like my mother and her mother.”

Case Analysis

The dryness of mucous membranes of the eyes and gastrointestinal tract and the rheumatic symptoms are the common pathological symptoms of Sjogren's disease. Of greater interest and specificity are her symptoms of altered consciousness which are suggestive of a mild degree of narcolepsy and these symptoms are typical of *Nux moschata* – this is confirmed by repertorisation (see rubrics and graph). The “never well since” antibiotics for dental and chest infections may imply an obstacle to cure from abnormal bowel flora and a bowel nosode is chosen to begin treatment.

Homeopathic treatment

Polybowel nosode 30CH three doses 12 hours apart, wait two weeks then *Nux moschata* LM1 potency two drops in water daily. Stop Betahistine.

Review Consultation 8 November 2005

“I feel generally better overall – I have got a lot done, been on holiday and been busy with my children.

... The dryness is better and I am using less eye drops. I still have lots of aching in my muscles but massage and physiotherapy helps. I have had 2 minor whiplash injuries but they are OK.

... The disorientation has been better and my jaw pain and stiffness is better. The constipation is variable but better. I have started having protected time for me every day and I have a hot bath. I might be a little less chilly.

... I have been having chest pains walking up hills and

have arranged to see a cardiologist. I am a bit anxious about the chest pains.

... I went on holiday and forgot my drops for two weeks but was OK for 12 days and then got a bit more tired but that resolved when I re-started the drops. My energy is 45-50/100. I went for a night out three nights in a row and didn't go downhill as usual afterwards.”

Homeopathic treatment

Continue *Nux moschata* LM1 but increase to four drops daily in water once or twice a day if required.

Outcome

She lives 300 miles away so further review has been by telephone. Cardiology investigations were normal and her chest pains responded to osteopathic manipulation. The dryness of eyes, mouth throat and vagina, pain, stiffness, episodes of altered consciousness, constipation have all continued to steadily improve. Minor relapses have responded to increased frequency of doses of *Nux moschata* and the potency has been increased by one LM step every two-three months to LM4.

Rubrics²

ALTERNATING states; Physical (41) ***
 UNCONSCIOUSNESS; General; dream, as from (20) ****
 TIME; Loss of conception of; passes too slowly, appearing longer (82) ***
 FAINTNESS, with (56) ***
 DREAM, as in a (120) ***
 Dryness: eyes mouth nose skin (543)
 Disorientated confusion of senses and distortion of time (255)
 Constipation distension and flatulence (702)
 Rheumatic pain joints from: cold chill damp fog; ameliorated by heat (499)
 SLEEPINESS; Overpowering (114) ****

Materia medica

Nux moschata (nutmeg) is made from the dried seeds of *Myristica fragrans*, a tree of the Indonesian spice islands. It contains 5-15 % hallucinogenic volatile oils: myristicin, elemecicin, safrol and eugenol. Eugenol and methyeugenol are related to amphetamines and MDMA (“ecstasy”). Elemecicin is related to mescaline. Abuse of nutmeg causes distortions of time and space perception with a feeling of detachment from reality, and sensations of: flying, floating and of limbs being separated from the body.

Nux moschata is often indicated in patients suffering either from narcolepsy or Sjogren's disease. Narcolepsy is a familial disorder affecting 0.2-1.6 per thousand of the population. The diagnostic criteria/symptoms consist of: excessive, irresistible daytime sleepiness; cataplexy: sudden muscle weakness with loss of tone and even collapse, variable paralysis, disordered movements and sudden emotional reactions of mirth, joy, fear or anger during which the person

	Nux-m.	Stram.	Sabad.	Cann-i.	Pib.	Lach.	Merc.	Cench.	Petr.	Op.	Hyos.	Glon.	Anh.	Taosc.	Nux-v.	Cann-s.	Ambr.	Tax-br.	Calc.
Total	37	26	19	17	26	26	24	14	19	22	17	18	8	5	25	20	22	6	23
Rubrics	10	8	8	6	9	9	9	6	7	7	7	7	4	5	8	7	7	6	8
Family																			
<u>ALTERNATING states: ... (41)</u>																			
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<u>SLEEPINESS: ... (114)</u>																			

cannot move but remains aware of their surroundings. Sjogren’s disease is a relatively rare auto-immune inflammatory disease affecting the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose and gastro-intestinal tract associated with variable degrees of inflammatory polyarthritis resembling rheumatoid arthritis.

Mind symptoms are centered on alterations of reality: a dreamy clairvoyant state, daydreaming with confusion, vanishing of thoughts while speaking or reading and distortions of space and time perception. There are changeable and alternating moods in which laughter and giggling can suddenly alternate with weeping. There is a rich variety of sensations as if: in a dream, everything is strange, being double, floating in air, lightness or leaden heaviness of limbs, head or limbs separated from the body or are enlarged, impending dissolution, coldness of heart, heart would cease beating or drops are falling from the heart.

The general and physical symptoms from the “proving” of tincture by Halbig in 1933 are rich in symptoms which reflect the properties of the bio-active constituents. There is a unique combination of dryness, drowsiness and dizziness with fainting and episodes of sudden muscle weakness. The dryness of mucous membranes is worse during menses and the dryness of the mouth is not associated with a central sensation of thirst – the patient simply drinks frequently because the mouth is physically dry. The food issues are a desire for nutmeg and other aromatic spices and coffee and brandy, with an aversion and aggravation from bread, milk and alcohol. Physical ailments develop from fright, shock, anger and grief. There is fainting triggered by: pain, sight of blood, strong odours, powerful emotions and fainting tends to be more frequent before and during menses. Convulsions may be precipitated if patients are forcibly

aroused during episodes of altered consciousness/trance states. Modalities are limited to an aggravation from cold air and getting wet (especially wet feet) and an amelioration from lying in a warm bed.

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- 1 Symptoms in the patient’s own words. [...] represents a gap in the patient’s narrative
- 2 Rubrics from Complete Repertory 2005 Van Zandvoort
- 3 Graph from MacRepertory version 6.36 at expert analysis settings

Removing obstacles to cure

As I outlined at the Faculty conference in Edinburgh early in November 2006, there are numerous obstacles to cure and in essence these fall into the well known “Three Ms” of diagnostic medicine:

- Mental/ emotional
- Metabolic and
- Mechanical

Sadly, the main obstacle to cure remains our inability to get to the core of the case.

Sankaran and Scholten have moved mountains to assist us here but the reality in day-to-day general practice is not to spot the elusive and admittedly rare Germanium nitricum, Skookum Chuck etc cases but to remember the obstacles to cure present in more or less 20% of the population. Common things occur commonly!

Untreated, they are formidable impediments to the