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Causes Of Behavioural Problems In Childhood And Its Homoeopathic Management

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Abstract:

Introduction: It is estimated that 13-22% of pediatric population has some type of behavioral or emotional problem. The prevalence is doubled in lower socioeconomic status households. In fact, 70-80% of parents have a behavioral concern when they visit their child's physician for routine or acute care and vast majority will not bring these concerns up unless they are solicited. Pediatrics is concerned with the health of infant, child, and adolescent, their growth, development and opportunities to achieve full potential as adults. As a physician, who assumes a responsibility for a child's physical, mental and emotional progress from conception to maturity, the pediatrician must be concerned with the social and environmental influences which have a major impact on the health and well-being of children and their families as well as with particular organ system and biological process.

Discussion: Children with behaviour disorders usually experience academic difficulties, poor relation with peers or adults, higher rates of injuries, school expulsions, and problem with law. If not managed properly at a very young age the behavior patterns develop into problems adapting in relationship and holding a job later. They often break rules or behave in an antisocial manner in adulthood.

Keywords: Childhood, Adulthood, Homoeopathy, Behavior, Prevalence, Mental, Physical

Introduction

It is estimated that 13-22% of paediatric population has some type of behavioural or emotional problem. The prevalence is doubled in lower socioeconomic status households. In fact, 70-80% of parents have a behavioural concern when they visit their child's physician for routine or acute care and vast majority will not bring these concerns up unless they are solicited.

Paediatrics is concerned with the health of infant, child, and adolescent, their growth, development and opportunities to achieve full potential as adults. As a physician, who assumes a responsibility for a child's physical, mental and emotional progress from conception to maturity, the pediatrician must be concerned with the social and environmental influences which have a major impact on the health and well being of children and their families as well as with particular organ system and biological process.

Behavioural problems in children are not disease entities but symptoms or reaction caused by emotional disturbance or environmental maladjustment. Fundamentally, it is the faulty development of the

personality and not any organic disease in body, that is responsible for these behavioural poblems. At the same time it should be remembered that there are certain nervous conditions like epilepsy, chorea, endocrine diseases, etc., which may be responsible for a given behavioural problem. These conditions should be excluded by a thorough physical examination and after correcting minor physical disorders like enlarged tonsils, adenoids, cervical glands and defective vision etc., the child should be given correct psychological treatment.

Behaviour problem and what is normal behaviour in a child is determined by child's age, physical and emotional development, personality and what is socially and culturally acceptable in his or her surroundings. A child who may be considered normal in one part of the world may be considered as one with behaviour problem in another part of the world. Family's expectation, whether the child is disruptive and what is expected from an average child of that age determine whether the child has a 'good' behaviour or 'bad' behaviour. Children learn to behave in a certain manner by observing other people.

Nothing is so much maligned as heredity for the many ills the causation of which is not understood. Behavioural problems are no exception. Very often parents find it difficult to believe that environmental factors, one of them being their own faulty methods of upbringing, can be responsible for the abnormal behaviour of their child and blame heredity for it saying "it's in the family". This is not to say that heredity is completely absolved of any responsibility. The question whether heredity or environment, whether nature or nurture, is responsible for shaping a child's personality and character, on which depends his behaviour in certain sets of circumstances, has been the subject of controversy for ages.

Behavioural disorders in children are caused by biology, environment, or a combination of the two. Examples of biological factors are genetics, chemical imbalances in the body, and damage to the central nervous system, such as a head injury. Many environmental factors also can affect mental health, including exposure to violence, extreme stress, and the loss of an important person.

Childhood disorders claim greater importance because the life patterns of later ages have their direct or indirect bearing on childhood. When base of building is weak building will also be shattered. As per homoeopathic philosophy, sickness relieves the individual as much as possible from the heavy burden of hereditary tendencies he carries, guards against increasing this load on his vital energy, and provides its own immunity against disease. Homoeopathy can correct this hereditary or acquired disease tendency with the help of constitutional medicine, and thereby the susceptibility is reduced and disease is prevented or cured.

Homoeopathic medicines are effective in managing the behaviour disorders resulting from past misconducts, injury (physical and mental), any organic disease and environmental reasons. Homoeopathy treats the person as a whole. It means that homoeopathic treatment focuses on the patient as a person, as well as his pathological condition. The homoeopathic medicines are selected after a full individualizing the case & analyse accordingly, which includes the medical history of the patient, physical and mental constitution, family history, presenting symptoms, underlying pathology, possible causative factors etc. A miasmatic tendency (predisposition/susceptibility) is also often taken into account for the treatment of chronic conditions. Usually, physician focuses on cause of the disease. A physician should know why this patient is sick & how. The disease diagnosis is important but in homoeopathy the cause of disease is not just probed to the level of bacteria and viruses. Other factors like mental, emotional and physical stress that could predispose a person to illness are also looked for. The correct homoeopathy remedy tries to correct this disease predisposition. The focus is not on curing the disease but to cure the person who is sick, to restore the health. If disease pathology is not very advanced, homoeopathy remedies do give a hope for cure but even in incurable cases, the quality of life can be greatly improved with homoeopathic medicines. The symptoms listed against each homoeopathic remedy may not be directly related to the disease because in homoeopathy general symptoms and constitutional indications are also taken into account for selecting a remedy.

According to the American Academy of Family Physicians, "normal" behaviour in children primarily depends on a child's personality, age, and level of development. While "normal" behavior typically fits in with social and developmental expectations, "bad" behaviour defies them. Normal children are healthy, happy and well adjusted. This adjustment is developed by providing basic emotional needs along with physical and physiological needs for their mental well-being. Every child should have tender loving care and sense of security about protection from parent and family members; they should have opportunity for development of

independence, trust, confidence and self-respect. These needs required to be satisfied to ensure optimum behavioural development.

HOMOEOPATHIC APPROACH

Homoeopathy can be defined as a complete system of drug therapeutics based on the law of similar. This law substantiates that a drug capable of producing in a healthy person a disease state similar in manifestation to that observed in a diseased person, acts as a curative agent if the disease is in a curable stage. In the incurable diseases this drug, namely, the similimum acts as the best palliative. It is based on inductive logic, in which exact observation, correct interpretation, rational explanation and scientific construction play leading role. Homoeopathy has naturally evolved its own methodology of case taking, of preparing drugs, of eliciting the effects of drugs, of selecting the remedy according to the law of similars, rules governing its administration and effects produced on the diseased.

Hahnemannian view of mental diseases

Hahnemann considers mental disease as one sided diseases of the chronic type affecting the whole psychosomatic entity where the brunt of derangement has fallen on the mental aspect of the human organism after the physical disturbances have been suppressed by non-homoeopathic treatment or through some other natural causes.

The mind and the body are not two absolutely separate entities. They form an indivisible, inseparable and intact whole, distinguishable by mind for easy understanding. The drug proving shows that the actions of a drug manifest themselves concomitantly through body and mind as in every fully proved drug picture there are corporeal symptoms along with alteration of thoughts, feelings, affections, volitions, intellect, memory etc. In natural diseases too the physical disturbance is often found associated with the mental counterparts. There is no absolute gap between body and mind. Illness presents through somatic symptoms or by mental alteration. In some cases one outlet is chocked and the main outburst takes place through the other. Thus only in extreme cases we find either purely physical diseases or purely mental diseases. Therefore, in treatment of mental diseases we should be careful to detect the physical symptoms, which preceded the present conditions and try to get the full picture.

Mental diseases are one sided diseases affecting the whole organism where the symptoms of derangement of mind and disposition are increased while the corporeal symptoms decline. Like all other one-sided diseases they are psoric in orgin.

Master Hahnemann defines mental diseases in §215 as, “All the so called mental and emotional diseases are nothing more than corporeal diseases in which the symptom of derangement of the mind and disposition peculiar to each of them is increased, whilst the corporeal symptoms decline (more or less rapidly) till it at length attains the most striking one sidedness.”

Hahnemannian classification of mental diseases

I. Mental disease appearing with the decline of corporeal disease which threatens to be fatal

In this type of mental disease, the so-called corporeal disease declines with a rapid increase of the psychical symptoms that were previously present. Finally the corporeal symptoms lose all their dangers and improve almost to perfect health, or rather decrease to such degree that their obscure presence can only be detected by the observation of a physician gifted with perseverance and penetration. In this manner they become transformed into one-sided disease with prominent mental symptoms. (§215)

II. Mental disease appearing suddenly as an acute disease in patient’s ordinary calm state caused by some exciting factor

Examples : Mental disease like insanity or mania may suddenly break out an acute disease in patient’s ordinary calm state from fright, vexation, the abuse of spirituous liquors etc. These diseases may be considered

as the sudden flarings of latent psora. The exciting factors here are fright, vexation or abuse of spirituous liquors etc. (§221)

III. Mental diseases of doubtful origin

There are certain mental diseases (not quite developed) where it is difficult to ascertain whether they really arise from a corporeal affection or from psychological factors e.g., fault of education, bad practices, corrupt morals, neglect of the mind, superstition or ignorance. (§ 224)

IV. Mental diseases arising from prolonged emotional causes

There are few emotional diseases, which originated and are kept up by some emotional causes, such as continued anxiety, worry, vexation, wrong and the frequent occurrence of great fear and fright. In contrast to the first type, they are primarily psychological in origin. Here the body is slightly affected in the beginning, but in course of time they destroy the corporeal health, often to a great degree. (§ 225)

Hahnemannian treatment of mental diseases

I. Mental diseases arising from corporeal diseases

Ø ***Construction of the complete picture of the disease***

In the first place the accurate description of all the phenomena of the previous so called corporeal disease, before it degenerated into a one-sided mental disorder, should be learned from the report of the patient's friends and relatives.

A comparison of these previous symptoms of the corporeal disease with the present less perceptible remnants (but which even now sometimes become prominent, when a lucid interval and a transient alleviation of the psychical disease occurs) will prove their presence in the patient. So the previous corporeal symptom should be added to the present indistinct remnants. Now the present symptom of mind and disposition should be accurately observed by the patient's friends, relatives and by the physician himself.

Ø ***Selection of medicine***

Then a medicine should be selected among the antipsoric medicines, which is capable of producing strikingly similar symptoms, especially an analogous disorder of the mind.

II. Mental diseases appearing suddenly

These cases should not be treated immediately with antipsorics, but in the first place they should be treated by administering highly potentized, minute, homoeopathic doses of proved acute medicines (e.g. Aconite, Belladonna, Stramonium, Hyoscyamus etc.) having similar mental states in their pathogenesis. This will revert psora to its former latent state for the time being and the patient appears to be quite well. But such a patient, who has recovered from an acute mental or emotional disease by the uses of these non-antipsoric medicines, should not be regarded as entirely cured. On the contrary, no time should be lost in perfecting the cure by means of prolonged antipsoric treatment in order to prevent recurrence.

III. Mental diseases of doubtful origin

i) If the mental affection is based on the psychic causes, it will diminish and stand improved by sensible, friendly exhortations, consolatory arguments, serious representations and sensible advice.

ii) Whereas a real mental malady, depending on bodily disease would be speedily aggravated by the same measures. Thus, melancholic patients will be still more dejected, and the chattering fool would become manifestly more foolish.

IV. Mental diseases arising from prolonged emotional causes

When this kind of mental affections are yet recent and have not made very great inroads on the corporeal state, they may be rapidly changed into a healthy state of mind by means of psychical remedies such as a display of confidence, friendly exhortations, sensible advice and often by a well disguised deception. An appropriate diet and regimen will re-establish the health of the body also.

But the fundamental cause in these cases is a psoric miasm which was not yet fully developed. So, for security's sake the seemingly cured patient should be subjected to a redical, antipsoric treatment, in order to prevent recurrence, which might readily occur.

It would be worthy to cite here what Hahnemann said in §228, "In mental and emotional diseases resulting from corporeal maladies, which can only be cured by homoeopathic antipsoric medicine conjoined with carefully regulated mode of life, an appropriate psychical behavior towards the patient on the part of those about him and of the physician must be scrupulously observed, by way of an auxiliary mental regimen. To furious mania we must oppose calm intrepidity and cool, firm resolution—to doleful, querulous lamentation, a mute display of commiseration in looks and gestures—to senseless chattering, a silence not wholly inattentive—to disgusting and abominable conduct and to conversation of a similar character, total inattention. We must merely endeavour to prevent the destruction and injury of surrounding objects, *without reproaching the patient for his acts*, and everything must be arranged in such a way that the necessity for any corporeal punishments and tortures, whatever, may be avoided. This is so much the more easily effected, because in the administration of the medicine – the only circumstance in which the employment of coercion could be justified – in the homoeopathic system the small doses of the appropriate medicine, *never* offend the taste, and may consequently be given to the patient without his knowledge in his drink, so that all compulsion is unnecessary."

In the next §229 Master Hahnemann writes, "On the other hand, contradiction, eager explanations, rude correction and invectives, as also weak, timorous yielding, are quite out of place with such patients; they are equally pernicious modes of treating mental and emotional maladies. But such patients are most of all exasperated and their complaints aggravated by contumely, fraud and deceptions that they can detect. *The physician and keeper must always pretend to believe them to be possessed of reason.* All kinds of external disturbing influences on their senses and disposition should be if possible removed; there are no amusements for their clouded spirit, no salutary distractions, no means of instruction, no soothing effects from conversation, books or other things for the soul that pines or frets in the chains of the diseased body, no invigoration for it, but the cure; it is only when the bodily health is changed for the better that tranquillity and comfort again been upon their mind."

Psychotherapy

Occasional remarks on the influence of the mind and its effects can be found in many passages of Hahnemann's writings and letters, but nowhere in such consecutive form and details as in Organon of Medicine.

The age of the patient, his mode of living and diet, his occupation, his domestic position, his social relations and so forth must next be taken into consideration, in order to ascertain whether these things have tended to increase his malady, or in how far they may favours or hinder the treatment. In like manner the state of his conception and mind must be attended to, to learn whether that presents any obstacle to the treatment.

In the §224, Hahnemann makes his approach abundantly clear, "If the mental disease be not quite developed, and it be still some what doubtful whether it really arose from a corporeal affection, or did it not rather result from faults of education, bad practices, corrupt morals, neglect of the mind, superstition or ignorance; the mode of deciding this point will be, that if it proceed from one or other of the latter causes it will diminish and be improved by sensible friendly exhortations, consolatory arguments, serious representations and sensible advice; whereas a real moral or mental malady, depending on bodily disease, would be speedily aggravated by such a course, the melancholic would become still more dejected, querulous, inconsolable and reserved, the spiteful maniac would become still more exasperated, and the chattering fool would become manifestly more foolish."

His approach with respect to what is currently called psychotherapy becomes more clear in §226, when Hahnemann writes, "It is only such emotional diseases as these, which were first engendered and subsequently kept up by the mind itself, that, *while they are yet recent and before they have made very great inroads on the corporeal state*, may, by means of psychical methods, such as display of confidence, friendly exhortations, sensible advice, and often by a well-disguised deception, be rapidly changed into a healthy state of mind (and with appropriate diet and regimen, seemingly into a healthy state of the body also)."

Psychotherapy consists of reassurance, relieving anxiety, and discovering the motivation for the patient's behaviour and making the patient perceive them.

Homoeopathic therapeutics

1. ALUMINA :

Constitution - Babies who are artificially feed, dry thin dark complexion, and diminished animal heat. Point of nose is cracked. Thin builds.

Mental - hasty, hurried, mental, confusion**,** confused about himself identity. Make mistakes in writing and speaking. Use wrong words.sad variable mood, hyper impulsive when sees sharp instrument and blood. Wakes up confused and wonders where he is.

Physical - Craving for indigestible things such as starch dry rice, chalk, charcoal, cloves, coffee, teagrounds; potatoes disagree, Obstinate constipation. Tottering gait staggers on walking. Agg new and full moon.

2. ANACARDIUM :

Mental - memory loss of, unable to take the decision feels as if he is two people or he has two wills. Depression irritability. Tendency to use violent language. Absent minded offended easily, lack of confidence. Fixation and obsessive compulsive behaviour.

Physical - Likes milk and dairy products.

3. ARSENICUM ALBUM :

Constitution - Anxious pale, thin, debilitated having hippocratic face, dirty and waxy look of the skin.

Mental - Restless Hyperactivity, Fastidiousness, neat in all things almost obsessions Fear of dark, irritability insomnia, thumb sucking, childhood.

Physical – Dislikes fats, likes cold drinks, thirst small quantity, agg around mid night.

4. BARYTA CARB :

Constitution - Dwarfish appearance mentally deficient physically weak and short, typical picture of cretinism having short stature swollen abdomen puffy face enlarged glands thick lips and idiotic appearance.

Mental - Idiotic foolish with loss of memory, shy, nervous in front of strangers hides behind the furniture; they are bashful timid easily frightened children do not want to play sits in the corner throws the stones at strangers. Inattentive, Milestones are delayed, late learning to talk**.**

Physical - Tendency to be over weight, saliva runs from the mouth both when awake or during sleep.

5. BELLADONNA :

Constitution - Bilious, plethoric person with red face , inflammatory and lymphatic constitutions.

Mental - Delirious condition brought on by cerebral congestion. Great exitement and violence. Furious rage and anger. He spits bites and strikes those arround him. Picks the bedclothes, tear them to pieces, and throws them off. He breaks into fits of laughter and gnashes the teeth. The patient imagines ghosts, monsters, hideous faces, various insects black animals, dogs, and other wild animals. He wants to run away. He uses absurd language, and desire to flee, escape and hide.

Physical - Great liable to take cold easily. Convulsions with fever. Sleepy but can not sleep.

6. CALCAREA CARB :

Constitution - Children who grow fat chalky look with red face, large belly like a inverted saucer with large head open fontanelles and sutures. Pale skin, soft bones, who sweat easily especially on the back side of the head and neck.

Mental - Slowness, delayed skills- walking and talking slow comprehension in school, poor recall, mistake in reading and writing. Forgetfulness forgets what they have read soon, fear the dark, spiders, insects, animals, and ghosts, startle easily. Cannot calculate, cannot do deep thinking.

Physical - Bones are soft and week. Delayed milestone and delayed assimilation, curvature of long bone, dentition delayed. Wants to be magnetized. Head sweats profusely. Desire for indigestible things and eggs.

7. CARCINOCIN :

Constitution - children has a brownish cafe au lait complexion numerous moles and blue sclerotics. There may be fair or dark complexion, bulky or emaciated body having some birth marks. Suffered from insomnia

Mental - mentally the patient is either very intelligent or very dull, disinterested, idiotic, backward or mentally defective children. He is either fastidious or possessed with filthy habits. Obstinate and gets pleasure in observing a thunderstorm. Desire to travel.

Physical - Family H/o diabetes, tuberculosis, pernicious anaemia, syphilis or any other degenerative condition. Great desire to lie on knee or chest - elbow position.

8. CHAMOMILLA :

Constitution - Children with light browned hair and one cheek red and hot, the other pale and cold .

Mental - Oversensitive bad temper, very irritable peevish snappish, uncivil, can not return a civil answer, cross, spiteful, impatient, capriciousness, wants this and that but when offered refuses it outright. Piteous moaning of the child. Quiet only when carried. Nervous child when punished goes into convulsions.

Physical - Sleepy but can not sleep. Diarrhoea during dentition. Convulsions caused by anger.

9. CINA :

Constitution - children with dark hair and complexion pale face, sickly body whitish or bluish appearance around the mouth with dark ring around the eyes.

Mental - Highly irritable peevish, cross and does not want to be touched or carried. Wants various things but when given refuses them.

Physical - Canine hunger or total loss of appetite. Nose picking, teeth grinding, the nose is scratchy and he rubs his nose against others shoulder when being carried. Screaming during sleep and worm trouble. One cheek red and other pale.

10. MAGNESIA MUR :

Constitution - Rachitic children puny children during dentition

Mental - Extremely restless and finds it difficult to keep still. Fidgetiness through out the body coupled with anxiety. Pacifism

Physical - Enlarged indurated glands, Increased hunger but unable to specify the desire knows not for what. Constipation.

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