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Dr. Anita Bagga
Professor, Department of
Pharmacy, Homoeopathic
Medical College and Hospital,
Chandigarh, Punjab, India

Dr. Amandeep Kaur
Assistant Professor,
Department of Pathology,
Homoeopathic Medical College
and Hospital, Chandigarh,
Punjab, India

Dr. Ishita Ganjoo
Associate Professor,
Department of Obs & Gynae,
Homoeopathic Medical College
and Hospital, Chandigarh,
Punjab, India

Dr. Deeksha Garg
Assistant Professor,
Department of Surgery,
Homoeopathic Medical College
and Hospital, Chandigarh,
Punjab, India

Corresponding Author:
Dr. Anita Bagga
Professor, Department of
Pharmacy, Homoeopathic
Medical College and Hospital,
Chandigarh, Punjab, India

Management of acute bronchitis in children with differential diagnosis of indicated homoeopathic medicines and illustration of few cases

Dr. Anita Bagga, Dr. Amandeep Kaur, Dr. Ishita Ganjoo and Dr. Deeksha Garg

Abstract

Acute Bronchitis develops due to inflammation of bronchioles, bronchi and trachea. It is an infectious disease mainly caused by viruses. Small children are at particular risk of getting infections because of smaller size of airways, lesser capacity of lungs to expel and due to developing state of Innate and Natural Acquired Immunity. Repeated upper respiratory tract infections in children with low immunity often leads to lower respiratory tract infections. There is notable increase in incidence of acute bronchitis in children especially in months of winter because dry air of winter help in easy spread of viruses. Respiratory mucosa also becomes dry due to inhaling dry air which may be polluted in the absence of rain. Dryness of mucosa is ineffective in eradication of the viruses because viruses can only be trapped by mucosal cells in the presence of mucus. Protective mechanism of sneezing or coughing is also compromised in winter because dry air lacks water molecules which are required for the act of sneezing and coughing. For a clinically diagnosed case of Acute Bronchitis, Murphy repertory has given 09 medicines which includes *Antimonium tartaricum*, Bryonia, Dulcamara, Ferrum Phosphoricum, Ipecac, Kalicarbonicum, Natrum Arsenicum, Phosphorus and Silicea which requires further elaboration on their differential diagnosis.

Keywords: Acute bronchitis, children, homoeopathic management, winter

Introduction

Role of immunity is very important in controlling all types of infections. Healthy immunity depend upon good nutrition, proper physical activity and absence of repeated exposure to infectious agents. Vitamin D deficiency has also been found to be associated with Influenza A and weak immune system^[1]. Modern sophisticated way of parenting is also not permitting proper interaction of children with external environment which helps in boosting natural immunity.

Homoeopathic medicine enhance Individual Immunity and are capable of acting as per the cause, effect and pathology of disease. Medicines help in expelling the viruses thereby reducing the inflammatory process and giving relief to painful symptoms. For the purpose of cure of acute bronchitis, knowledge of Homoeopathic medicine in regards to what is curative in them as well as the methodology to differentiate the common indicated medicines is important. There is need to take proper case taking, evaluation of symptoms and selection of medicine as per seat of disease on totality of symptoms as given by an individual. For effective and proper treatment covering all stages of disease, there is requirement to develop a whole plan for proper treatment till the disease is cured as there is need to change the medicine if the symptoms also change. Partially indicated medicines are often given in a course of disease for complete annihilation of malady.

Discussion

1. Aetiology: Most common cause of Acute Bronchitis in children is viral infection but it may also be caused by bacteria, dust allergens and smoke^[2]. Homoeopathic aetiology includes many other factors like exposure to cold air, winds, change of temperature, change of season, getting wet, eating cold food or drinks, sour or spicy food etc. so commonly found in the history of children.

2. Pre Disposing Factor: Enlarged tonsils, adenoids, asthma, allergies, exposure to smoke ^[2]. Family history in homoeopathy is also an important pre disposing factor.

3. Clinical Features

- Acute bronchitis often begins with coryza which then extends to chest producing cough.
- Cough may be dry or productive.
- Chest congestion with symptoms of chill, mild fever, body pains, pain in chest and wheezing in chest.
- Sore throat and vomiting may be present ^[3].

4. Duration: Most of the symptoms are better in 7-14 days except cough which may resolve with in 3-4 weeks.

Therapeutic Index

Clinically indicated Homoeopathic Medicines for Acute Bronchitis in children –

Rubric “Acute Bronchitis in Children “ given in clinical chapter of Murphy repertory mentions 09 medicines which includes *Antimonium tartaricum*, Bryonia, Dulcamara, FerrumPhosphoricum, Ipecac, Kali carbonicum, NatrumArsenicum, Phosphorus and Silicea ^[4]. The individual symptoms of respective medicines are given below-

- Antimonium tartaricum*:** It is indicated for cases with no history of coryza. The first symptom is often of cough beginning in winter or every winter. Cough is accompanied by sneezing which is excited and aggravated by drinking milk especially cold milk. Short episodes of cough with coarse rattling of mucus in chest is peculiar. Though expectoration is little but patient is better only after expectoration, it may be in the form of vomiting in children ^[4]. Fever may or may not be present as it is not the dominant symptom found in *Antimonium tartaricum*. Drowsiness, debility, sweat on face and thick white coating of tongue may present as concomitant symptom ^[5].
- Bryonia*:** It is indicated for winter cough which is brought on by dryness of air passages, from cold temperature, dry cold air and entering a warm room. Cough is accompanied by sneezing. Every episode of cough produces pain in chest and the child must put hands on chest while coughing to minimize the movement of lungs to get relief. Dry cough may lead to productive cough with rattling of mucus in chest with fever. Cough may be excited or ameliorated by drinking butwarm fluids always ameliorates. Cough is agg. by lying with head low and on left side but is ameliorated by lying on back. Child must sit up to get relief from cough ^[4]. There is dryness of mouth, throat and tongue with peculiar thirst of Bryonia ^[5].
- Dulcamara*:** It is also indicated for winter coughs which are brought on by wet weather, changeable weather, cold temperature esp. damp cold air. Entering a warm room also excites cough. Dulcamara is needed for children who gets cough after every bath. Though cough is aggravated by lying but it is always ameliorated by sleep which is a peculiar symptoms of Dulcamara. (Kali bich) ^[4].
- Ferris Phosphoricum*:** It is indicated in Bronchitis of young children presented with early stage of febrile conditions and in first stage of all inflammatory affections before exudation sets in. Cough is dry, short and painful, better at night and is accompanied by coryza and fever ^[5].
- Ipecac*:** Ipecac cough begins with coryza in winter and is due to dryness of air passages and from inhaling dry cold air. It restarts on entering a warm room. Cough is often accompanied by catarrh and fever. Persistent cough with episodes of long paroxysms is hall mark of Ipecac.
- Ipecac is esp. indicated in fat children ^[5] for fine rattling of mucus in chest with every breath. The child may seem to have a deficient breathing due to mucus in chest. Ipecac cough is aggravated by lying on left side and is ameliorated by cold drinks. (cold drink ameliorates spasmodic cough is only found in Ipecac) ^[4]. The peculiar characteristic is the presence of clean tongue with nausea and vomiting ^[5].
- Kali Carbonicum*:** Kali carbonicum is indicated in winter cough. It has peculiar tendency to catch cough when the arm or hand is exposed to cold. Cough may start from drinks esp. milk though sometimes drinks may ameliorate cough. It is esp. indicated in dry cough with high fever which disturbs the sleep. Rattling cough is not found in kali carb. Cough is agg by lying esp. at night, disturbing and preventing sleep. Patient has to wake up from sleep. Turning to right side ameliorate cough. Cough is particularly agg at night from 2 am to 5 am with maximum occurrence at 3 am ^[4].
- Natrum Arsenicum*:** Natrum Arsenicum is indicated for elderly children over seven years of age with symptoms of cough with coryza, no fever and greenish expectoration with racking cough ^[5].
- Phosphorus*:** Phosphorus is indicated in cough which is chronic in nature, occur at every change of weather esp. stormy weather, from cold temperature, cold air and from bad effects of cold wind on chest. Cough is aggravated by going to warm room from cold air or vice versa. There is pain in throat while coughing and cough is brought on by drinking. Cough is accompanied by catarrh, fever and rattling of mucus in chest. Phosphorus is the only medicine when rattling is heard while eating. Cough is aggravated by lying on left side, better by lying on right side and on abdomen.
- Cough also occurs during sleep thereby preventing sleep and making the child to wake up and sit up from sleep. Phosphorus is indicated for a peculiar pattern of three coughs in succession ^[4]. Cough is brought on by loud talking, reading and laughing esp. in tall slender and sympathetic constitutions ^[5].
- Silicea*:** There is cough at every change of weather esp. from damp and stormy weather. Cough has tendency to take a chronic course and is excited by cold air, cold temperature and cold becoming of any single part of the body like hand, arm or feet. Cough is also brought on when the child gets wet. Cough is aggravated by running, laughing and even eating hastily. Cough is accompanied by catarrh and sneezing but no fever. Cough is aggravated during sleep. It occurs at night on lying esp. on back and on right side. Dry cough in children often starts on drinking cold drinks as well as eating cold food and is ameliorated by drinking warm fluids which is peculiar to Silicea only ^[4].

Table 1: Differential diagnosis of indicated medicines for Acute Bronchitis in Children [4, 5]

<i>Antimonium tartaricum</i>	It is given when there is excessive coarse rattling of mucus in chest while breathing and child vomits milk because cough is aggravated by drinking cold milk. Tongue may be coated and child is drowsy.
Bryonia	It is indicated when every bout of cough hurts the chest and child must sit up to control the cough. Amelioration is by warm fluids and supporting the chest with hands.
Dulcamara	It is indicated for cough that starts after bathing or in damp wet cold weather or even exposure to damp cold air. Cough is ameliorated by sleep at night.
Ferrum Phosphoricum	It is indicated in first stage of Acute Bronchitis in young children.
Ipecac	It is indicated when there is fine rattling of mucus in chest while breathing and breathing seems deficient. There is persistent cough with long paroxysms. Tongue is clean.
Kalium Carbonicum	It is indicated in cough that disturbs the sleep and child wakes up from sleep which is generally from 2 am to 5 am. Cough aggravated by milk and from catching cold on exposed arm or hand.
Natrum Arsenicum	It is indicated for elderly children over seven years of age with greenish expectoration.
Phosphorus	It is indicated for cough during storms and from catching cold on chest, from walking in winds. It is aggravated by drinking, laughing, talking, lying on left side and ameliorated by lying on right side and on abdomen.
Silicea	It is indicated for cough when any part of the body becomes cold, from damp cold and stormy weather, by laughing, reading, running, eating hastily, getting wet in winter during change of weather. Amelioration by warmth in any kind.

Indicators of Homoeopathic medicines for Acute Bronchitis in Children [4, 5]

Initial Symptoms

- 1) Cough, coryza, sneezing, pain in throat and fever- *Ferrum Phosphoricum*
- 2) Cough that has origin in coryza – *Ipecac, Phosphorus*
- 3) Cough with sneezing – *Antimonium tartaricum, Bryonia, Silicea*
- 4) Cough with coryza – *Ferrum phosphoricum, Ipecac, phosphorus Silicea, Kali carbonicum*
- 5) Cough with coryza and sneezing – *Silicea*
- 6) Cough from elongated uvula – *Bryonia*

Advanced Symptoms

- 1) Mucus in chest – *Antimonium tartaricum, Ipecac*
- 2) Rattling cough – *Antimonium tartaricum, Bryonia, Ipecac, Phosphorus, Silicea*
- 3) Rattling while breathing – *Ipecac, Antimonium tartaricum*
- 4) Rattling coarse while breathing – *Antimonium tartaricum*
- 5) Rattling fine while breathing – *Ipecac*
- 6) Rattling breathing, lying on back- *Kali carbonicum*
- 7) Rattling during sleep – *Antimonium tartaricum*
- 8) Rattling while eating – *Phosphorus*
- 9) Rattling after cough – *Antimonium tartaricum*

Cause of Disease

Weather

- Cough during winter – *Antimonium tartaricum, Bryonia, Ipecac, Dulcamara, Kali carb*
- Cough with change of weather – *Dulcamara, Kali carbonicum, Phosphorus, Silicea*
- Cough in damp weather – *Dulcamara, Silicea*
- Cough in stormy weather – *Phosphorus, Silicea*

Body parts

- When part of body becomes cold -
 Arm/hand - *Kali carbonicum*
 Hand/feet/ or any single part – *Silicea*
 Cold wind on chest – *Phosphorus*
 Cough after bathing – *Dulcamara*

Cough after getting wet – *Silicea*

Modalities

Modalities in relation to eating and drinking

- Aggravation:** From eating cold food and cold drinks – *Silicea*
- Eating hastily – *Silicea*
- Drinking milk – *Antimonium tart (cold milk), Kali carbonicum*

Amelioration

- By warm drinks – *Bryonia, Silicea*
- By cold drinks – *Ipecac*

Modalities in relation with lying

Aggravation

- Lying – *Antimonium tartaricum, Bryonia, Ipecac, Kali carbonicum, Phosphorus, Silicea*
- By lying on left side – *Bryonia, Phosphorus, Ipecac*
- By lying right side – *Silicea*
- By lying on back – *Silicea*

Amelioration

- By lying on right side – *Phosphorus*
- By lying on abdomen – *Phosphorus*
- By sitting up – *Phosphorus, Bryonia*

Modalities in relation to sleep

- During sleep – *Ipecac, Phosphorus, Silicea*
- Preventing sleep – *Kali carbonicum, Phosphorus*
- Disturbing sleep – *Phosphorus*
- Waking from sleep -*Kali carbonicum, Phosphorus (must sit up), Silicea*

Amelioration

- Better by sleep – *Dulcamara*

Accompanied symptoms

Pain

- Painful cough – *Antimonium tartaricum, Bryonia, Ferrum phos, Phosphorus*
- Pain chest while coughing – *Bryonia,*
- Pain throat while coughing – *Phosphorus*

Paroxysms of cough

- Attacks follow one another quickly – *Antimonium tartaricum, Ipecac*

Long coughs – *Ipecac*

Short coughs – *Antimonium tartaricum*, *Kali carbonicum*

Two or three coughs – *Phosphorus*.

Conclusion

Homeopathic medicines are very effective for treatment of Acute Bronchitis in Children. Course of recovery depends upon the stage when the child is brought to a Homeopathic Physician. Homeopathic medicines are generally chosen on selecting the most finer symptoms presented by the patient. For eg.-

- 1) Both *Antimonium tart.* and *Ipecac* has rattling of mucus in chest but the rattling of *Antimonium Tart.* is coarse where as it is fine rattling in *Ipecac*.
- 2) Milk aggravates cough in both *Antimonium Tart* and *Kalicarb* but rattling is more marked in *Antimonium Tart.* and fever is more marked in *Kalicarb*.
- 3) *Dulcamara* is the only medicine in which cough is ameliorated by sleep whereas *kali carb* is made worse by sleep. Cough from bathing is peculiar to *Dulcamara* and *Kali carb.* catches cold from exposed arm or hand.
- 4) *Bryonia* and *Phosphorus* are aggravated by drinking but *Bryonia* is relieved by drinking esp. warm fluids. Both *Bryonia* and *Phosphorus* must sit up from cough. In *Phosphorus*, child sits up from sleep whereas in *Bryonia*, the child must sit up from lying and not from sleep.
- 5) *Silicea* is worse by catching cold from any exposed part of the body, on becoming wet, from drinking cold drinks and is better by warmth of any kind, even warming abdomen relieves the symptoms whereas *Ipecac* cough is better by cold drinks.

Illustration of Cases

A Case of *Antimonium Tart*

A child of 2 years of age with symptoms of cough and coryza from 10 days. Nasal discharge was watery in character and there was rattling of mucus in chest. Expectoration was thick and white. There was no complaint of pain in chest on coughing.

History of present illness was that the complaint started with coryza and fever at start of winter month. He was treated initially with allopathic medicine. Fever subsided but coryza persisted.

Mental general: Child was irritable

Physical general: Reduced appetite.

Chest examination: Rattling were heard on left side of chest.

Symptoms taken for consideration: Irritability during coryza. Coarse rattling of mucus in chest with relief from expectoration.

For irritability, cough from, two medicines are *Bryonia* and *Cina*. But the medicine selected was *Antimonium tart* on the basis of progress of disease with the presence of coarse rattling. *Bryonia* was ruled out because *bryonia* is more indicated for pain in chest instead of rattling and *Cina* was ruled out as it is not clinically indicated for acute bronchitis. Medicine prescribed- *Antimonium tartaricum* 30 in 6 doses was given for two days followed by *sac lac* tds for another 3 days. After 5 days, child was better in cough and coryza.

Antimonium tartaricum works wonderfully if given on symptom coarse rattling in chest.

A Case of *Ferrum Phosphoricum*

A male child, aged 14 years with presenting complaints of Coryza

Dry cough with pain in throat which is better at night. Mild fever (100* C) since 4 days.

Cause: Exposure to cold winds.

On examination: Chest clear with no wheezing and no pain in chest.

Mental general: Irritable on slight provocation

Physical general: Reduced appetite and thirst.

Medicine selection: Medicine was selected therapeutically considering the initial stage of disease for which the *Ferrum phos* acts very well.

Medicine prescribed: *Ferrum phos* 30, 4 hourly for 2 days followed by *Sac Lac* 30 tid for 3 days.

Result- Patient was markedly relieved. There was no coryza, no pain in throat, cough and fever. Now child was less irritable. *Ferrum phos* is one of the indicated medicine for acute bronchitis in the initial stage and it worked wonderfully in stoppage of further spread of disease.

A Case of *Silicea*

A case of 14 months old child was seen in the clinic. The child was already under allopathic treatment and was suffering from following symptoms-

Coryza since 5 days

Cough aggravated at night, disturbing sleep.

Fever more than 100*C

Occasional vomiting

Other symptoms included: Dentition period with excessive salivation.

History of present illness: History revealed that he has yet not started walking and was crawling on cold floor always. Child was removing cap exposing his head to severe cold of winter.

On examination: Rattling of mucus in chest, red cheeks.

Mental generals: Child was very irritable, obstinate and was crying on every little occasion.

Symptoms selected were: Crying in children, Salivation in dentition, Perspiration head sleep during, Cold becoming of single parts

Medicine selected: *Silicea* was the only medicine covering all the symptoms and it was prescribed on the totality of the case. It cured all complaints of the child in 2-3 days.

A Case of *Dulcamara*

A female child of 4 years of age, came with presenting complaints – Cough with loose expectoration after exposure to cold weather.

Cough was aggravated in daytime without disturbing sleep. Patient was afebrile.

Physical generals – Appetite is reduced

Thirst – Increased for large quantity of water whenever water is taken.

Prescribing symptoms – Cough after exposure to cold weather, Cough better by sleep, unquenchable thirst.

Medicine prescribed- Dulcamara 30 tid for 3 days.

Result – patient was relieved in cough. Dulcamara worked marvellously in removing expectoration in a short time.

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