A Case of Irritant Contact Dermatitis and Its Successful Treatment With Constitutional Homeopathic Medicine

Dr. Harsh Chavda
A Consulting homeopath

Abstract:
Classic homeopathic medicine can be used as a holistic natural treatment of irritant contact dermatitis. Homeopathy medicine taps the constitutional individuality. Individuality which is expressing through a certain disease is just a medium of expressing the distress within. Ascertaining the individuality is the key process involved. In the mentioned case of irritant contact dermatitis homeopathic medicine Pulsatilla evolved. The objective result clearly suggests the efficacy of constitutional homeopathic medicine in such cases.

Brief about irritant contact dermatitis
In general, dermatitis is a term referred to inflammation of the skin. While contact dermatitis is inflammatory and eczematous skin disease. Contact dermatitis can be divided into 1) allergic contact dermatitis and 2) irritant contact dermatitis

Irritant contact dermatitis occurs when our skin gets exposed to a toxic substance/material. It is basically a localized skin inflammation. Here, this substance damages skin’s outer layer which is considered to be the protective layer.

To be more precise, Irritant contact dermatitis is a cell mediated hypersensitivity skin reaction resulting from the exposure of sensitized individuals to a contact irritant/substance.

Substances responsible for the development of this condition can be bleaching agents / acids / hair dyes/varnish / certain plants (poinsettias, peppers) / washing powder/detergents/kerosene/fertilizers/pesticides/any harsh rather heavy cleaning agents. But, this irritant contact dermatitis can also happen when our skin gets exposed to the substances which are not toxic. E.g. soap, water.

Reaction to certain substances in case of irritant contact dermatitis varies from patient to patient. Certainly the Intensity of reaction depends upon the sensitivity/susceptibility of an individual, concentration and amount of the substance. In many of the cases, occupation of an individual seems to be working as one of the factors responsible for the development of this condition. That is the reason why duration and frequency to exposure are without fail taken as important factors while the interpretation and analysis of the case.

Clinical features of irritant contact dermatitis
- Swelling on the affected area
- Mild, moderate or severe redness which is very much noticeable
- Scaling or flaking (peeling)
- Itching (is mostly a predominant symptom)
- Blistering of the skin
- Hive like swollen appearance
- Burning
- Stinging
- Affected areas may show a sharp and well defined border corresponding to the area of chemical exposure.
Homeopathic approach to IRRITANT CONTACT DERMATITIS and concept of hypersensitivity

Hahnemann had termed this as IDIOSYNCRASY in 116 and 117 aphorisms in the “Organon of medicine”. He mentioned that those idiosyncratic individuals are prone to be more or less morbidly affected by certain things which may make no impression and produce no change in many other individuals.

In aphorism 16, Dr Hahnemann emphasizes upon the importance of the constitution (physical and mental make up of an individual) which carries a great value in the healing art of homeopathy and certainly, while perceiving the case of a sick individual, we must conceive the clarity about the constitution which becomes sick first.

In aphorism 5, Dr Hahnemann has very well described certain important points that uniquely guide the physician while treating the individual. Which includes constitution of the patient, exciting cause, miasm, moral and intellectual character, occupation, mode of living, habits, social and domestic relations, age and sexual function.

These aphorisms clearly explain the importance of constitution and it significantly guides us in practicing the healing art.

Case report

A 27 year old female presented with irritant contact dermatitis on the dorsum of the palm, of Right side, of 6 months’ duration. Her skin was very dry and cracked over the affected area, scaling was very prominent along with red patches. Patient said “Itching is too much, Red patches appear over the dorsum of her palm especially when they come in contact with bleaching agents/detergents/heavy soaps and even a hand sanitizer”. To prevent her legs from the contact of detergents, she is used to wearing socks and shoes while performing any washing related task. But what she cannot prevent is her hands from getting in contact with bleaching agents/detergents. Although she uses washing machine to get rid of the very issue that trouble her the most and makes her hands prone to acquire red patches that causing itching, she has to wash her husband’s white clothes and son’s few garments a once or twice a day. She has already taken treatment for the same from dermatologist who had administered certain ointments/external applications and a few specific medicines to control the further progression of the skin condition. She continued taking it for quite a good period of time may be for 5 to 6 months. But as soon as she would discontinue, the same scene she would experience and feel upset. Her stomach seems to be upset many a times a month especially whenever she consumes a piece of a cheesecake/ a chocolate cake/or any creamy and heavily frosted and iced pastry. She feels dryness in the mouth but not inclined to have water. During cold and cough, the sense of smell and taste remains intact while sometimes both of them or one of them gets affected. But, she prefers to remain in air conditioned room. There is past history of typhoid. She has been experiencing severe hair fall after pregnancy. Her periods are irregular since last 3 to 4 months. Sometimes it lasts for 7 to 8 days and flow is very scanty. While sometimes it lasts for only 4 to 5 days. Flow never remains the same, it keeps on changing. Sometimes it is too thick, dark and so never stable.

She very well looks after her in laws. She is so dedicated to her husband She likes to look after him and she expects the same from him and if in any case she doesn’t receive same response, many a times she would
feel sad about it. She is a vegetarian, while her husband loves tucking into meat. Following her husband’s affection towards non-veg delicacies, she learned many non-vegetarian dishes from one of her friends and nowadays she happily prepares various meat dishes for her husband, keeping her aversion at bay. On contrary, she feels that husband is over occupied in business and he doesn’t have enough time to for her, she this is why sometimes feels insecure from within and connects these things to the chain of negative thoughts. A year before, when she got dressed up beautifully for one party at night, her husband didn’t like her jewelry and told her to change it. She then cried silently and followed her husband’s opinion. She says: I don’t remember what sounds appealing to me. I cannot point out my likes and dislikes easily. I’m very much dedicated to my husband and his family. Sometimes when I get upset or feel low, my hubby consoles me and that sounds so appealing to me. That is an emotion which mildly soothes me. She loves gelling out with her neighbors and family members. She is very much interested in reading religious books. Sometimes, I cannot decide what is happening with my mind. I’m very much indecisive and cannot understand what to pick from the hovering thoughts.

**Brief of Prescription perspective:**
Pulsatilla pratensis is the homeopathic medicine prepared from a plant belongs to Ranunculaceae family having anemone as its active ingredient. This medicine carries its major efficacy on hormonal imbalance, female reproductive system, skin, Gastric issues & immunity based problems. The patient typo represented by pulsatilla is generally the individual with mild, gentle & timid temperament with rapidly changing physical & psychological state. Generally the patient prefers to be in open air, cold environment & wants to drink as less water as possible. Understanding the pulsatilla individual in totality & prescribing it in apt potency can produce the valuable results even in most challenging cases.

In the aforementioned case, the feelings of emotional instability, vulnerability, submissive/yielding disposition, and fragility are expressed which are very much indicators of Pulsatilla. Along with the emotional dimension, this medicines is beautifully and cohesively covering the physical aspect of the case. Having perceived the totality, pulsatilla is the medicine that satisfies the constitutional approach.

**Prescription with dosage:**
Rx: 1) Pulsatilla 200 4 pills OD for 7 days
    2) SL 30 4 pills BD for 23 days
Constitution approach was chosen while designing the prescription and Following prescription was taken for consideration.

1st follow up

After a month, 1st follow up was taken. Area of affection with Red patches over the dorsum of the palm was not so reduced but itching was much under control. Redness of patches and scaling were quite under control. This time she had used sanitizer quite often but intensity of itching was not that severe. During the course of treatment, she acquired cold and cough a once but she recovered soon within a few days only. She said “menstrual flow was good this time, quite good and consistent after many months”.

Rx: 1) Pulsatilla 200 4 pills OD for 7 days
2) SL 30 BD for 23 days
2nd follow up
No any major and significant change noticed. Emotional instability was still at its peak and she emphasized much upon it.
Rx: 1) Pulsatilla 1M 4 pills OD for 5 days
   2) SL 30 BD for 25 days

3rd follow up
Markedly improved. Her dorsum of the palm was clean and patient feels better mentally and emotionally as well.

Reference