

Homeopathy and Anemia

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Anemia is a familiar subject to many members of the female population.

I remember regularly feeling so tired and drowsy when driving a car in my much younger years that I'd have to pull over, exit the car and run around it a couple of times, or even take a short nap before finishing the trip. This was a regular occurrence until blood tests showed severe, chronic anemia with a ferritin level below 5. A normal level in adult females before menopause is 10-120 ng/ml. Quite the range, right? Little did I know back then that 100 ng/ml is ideal. If your ferritin levels are only at 12 or 15, your doctor may not see a reason to alert you to the relatively low levels, and you will suffer as a result.

Anemia is defined as a decrease in the total amount of red blood cells or hemoglobin in the blood (the iron-containing molecules in our red blood cells that carry oxygen) or a lowered ability of the blood to carry oxygen for another reason. Because all human cells require oxygen to function, low oxygen levels due to anemia will cause weakness, fatigue and drowsiness.

There are various causes for anemia, with the most common being iron deficiency. Iron is essential for human, animal and plant organisms and required for the formation of hemoglobin in humans and chlorophyll in plants. (If your plants look wilted with a pale or sickly yellow color, they may be iron-deficient.) Iron is needed for all the respiratory and oxygen-related processes of living tissue. The body of an adult weighing seventy kilos (roughly one hundred fifty pounds) contains about 4.2 grams of iron, a tiny but non-negotiable amount. About 70 percent of this iron is bound in hemoglobin.

ANEMIA AND MENSTRUATION

In women of childbearing age, monthly menstruation is the usual culprit for iron-deficiency anemia, especially if the menstrual flow is heavy.

Back in the days of attending naturopathic college, I was racked by heavy periods with large clots and severe menstrual cramps, which I valiantly tried to treat using my newfound knowledge of homeopathy. A number of remedies worked temporarily, but the cramps, bleeding and clots would return after a short reprieve.

Fast-forward to final exams in my postgraduate training course in homeopathy when I was around thirty-three years old. Right in the middle of the several-hour-long examination, the vile menstrual cramps hit suddenly. I was doubled over in labor-pain-voltage agony within minutes. There was no way I could finish the exam. I timidly approached our teacher, Dr. Andre Saine, ND, and told him about my condition. Amazingly, this incredible doctor had a full acute homeopathic remedy kit with him in the hotel where we were taking the exam.

I told him my symptoms. He quickly glanced at his watch, unfurled his extensive kit and proceeded to pop two pellets of a mystery remedy under my tongue. Three minutes later, all the pain was gone! What would normally have been the onset of two days of torture was all over in a few minutes, and I went back to writing the exam as if nothing had happened.

The remedy was *Belladonna*, a homeopathic preparation of deadly nightshade. Andre had checked his watch for the time. As it turns out, *Belladonna* is known for addressing aggravations that occur at 3:00 pm and, to a lesser extent, 3:00 am. From then on, I carried a little vial of *Belladonna* 30C in my purse. The next month, almost to the minute at 3:00 pm, the cramps hit suddenly again and, as previously, were vanquished by the little remedy within minutes. The same routine took place during the following three months, and after that I never had a menstrual cramp again! The bleeding also was much reduced, and there were no more clots. How a homeopathic remedy would know the time of day is a complete mystery to me, but such is the enigma of homeopathy.

Belladonna is not a remedy for cramps per se, or for bleeding or anemia, but for the whole state of a person. It is most famous as a remedy for sudden, intense fevers in children, but any time one is confronted with a sudden, intense, painful or acute situation, especially if worse at 3:00 am or pm, *Belladonna* should come to mind.

GASTROINTESTINAL BLEEDING AND ANEMIA

Blood loss from any cause can lead to anemia. Years ago, a friend of mine landed in a hospital needing a blood transfusion due to low-grade gastrointestinal (GI) bleeding caused by the regular consumption of low-dose aspirin. After becoming weaker and weaker, he finally admitted himself to the ER, where he was diagnosed and subsequently revived. He had apparently been close to dying from anemia caused by this slow bleed. Evidence suggests that this is not an uncommon aspirin-related outcome. Even doses that are ten to twenty times lower than are needed for pain relief have been found to lead to GI bleeding and anemia. In 2000, the association of GI bleeding with relatively low doses of aspirin was confirmed in a meta-analysis that examined twenty-four different studies conducted with almost sixty-six thousand subjects over more than twenty-five years.¹ A decade and a half later, in 2017, a study published in *The Lancet* linked daily low doses of aspirin to as many as twenty thousand bleeds annually in the UK, of which at least three thousand were fatal.²

Aspirin in low doses is commonly recommended to older adults to help prevent strokes and heart attacks.³ Roughly 40 to 60 percent of adults aged seventy-five or older in the U.S. and Europe take daily aspirin or other antiplatelet drugs for these reasons.⁴ Questioning this approach, the authors of the 2017 *Lancet* study emphasized that aspirin risks increase sharply with age, with those over seventy-five being precisely those at highest risk. In fact, studies show that “people taking aspirin [have] worse outcomes and a higher risk of having a heart attack than those not taking aspirin”—the opposite of what doctors tell patients.³ Stating that “At age 75 years or older, major upper gastrointestinal bleeds [are] mostly disabling or fatal,” the *Lancet* authors suggest that seniors should be on aspirin only if also given a proton-pump inhibitor (which, of course, will create a host of other issues, but such is allopathic medicine).²

In homeopathy, a remedy called *China officinalis*, made from the bark of the cinchona tree, is often used for anemia and weakness caused by chronic blood loss. The bark of the cinchona tree also gave us quinine,⁵ famously used for centuries for malaria and a close relative of hydroxychloroquine, now embroiled in controversy about whether or not it is helpful in the treatment of Covid-19.⁶ Interestingly, severe cases of Covid-19 are reputed to be associated with low iron levels and patients gasping for air—very similar to anemia.

ANEMIA AND MALABSORPTION

Anemia, as already mentioned, can have many causes. These are often nutritional in nature, such as when vitamin B12, which is also needed for normal blood cell formation, is not absorbed properly. Other causes may include low stomach acid levels, celiac disease or even mild and not easily diagnosed gluten or grain intolerance. Thus dietary factors should always be carefully examined.

If dietary correction and/or proper supplementation fail to address the issue, homeopathy may be helpful. For example, there are two well-known homeopathic remedies to improve iron absorption: *Ferrum metallicum* (a remedy made from iron) and *Ferrum phosphoricum* (a remedy made from iron phosphate). *Ferrum phosphoricum* is one of the twelve original tissue or function salts in the biochemical healing method developed by the German homeopathic doctor Wilhelm Schuessler between 1872 and 1898.⁷ Schuessler thought ill-health was caused by an imbalance in the body's twelve vital "cell salts"—minerals needed for good health. He created potentized microdoses of these cell salts, usually sold in a 6X potency. These have been in use for over one hundred years now and are popular with lay people and practitioners alike.

The cell salt of *Ferrum phosphoricum* has been used to improve the assimilation of iron and the production and function of red blood cells.⁸ It is also often used in the early stages of acute and inflammatory conditions with lower grade fevers. Early biochemists like Schuessler considered blood in the human body to be the equivalent of soil to a

plant. Knowing that poor, exhausted soil produces weak and sickly plants, they thought that poor blood—lacking in essential constituents—would produce weak, sickly bodies prone to disease. By restoring the vital constituents of the blood with *Ferrum phosphoricum* and other tissue salts, they found that healing was possible.⁹

Anemia is also associated with chronic diseases such as cancer and HIV/AIDS (which can interfere with the production of red blood cells) as well as sickle cell anemia, which is caused by a defective form of hemoglobin and results in an abnormal crescent shape of the red blood cells. Homeopathy may be helpful in such cases as well, as it always addresses the individual's overall state rather than just the symptoms or the particular disease.

To conclude, homeopathy can often be helpful to address the various causes as well as ill-effects of anemia. There is no need to be a bloodless, wilted creature!

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