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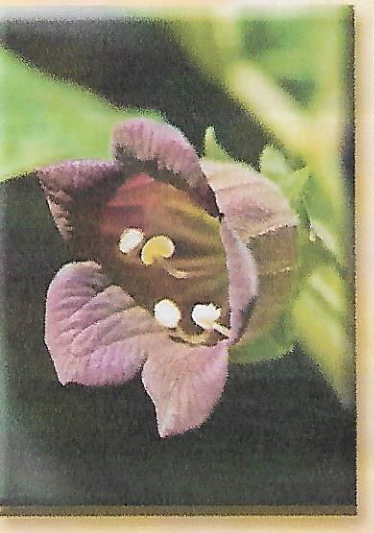

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A Case of Hyperpigmentation of the Skin

Dr. Vijay Dabhade, MD[Hom]

Abstract : A case of hyperpigmentation of skin treated successfully with homeopathic *Chininum sulphuricum* in different potencies is presented.
Keywords: hyperpigmentation, blackish discoloration, homeopathic treatment of; *Chininum sulphuricum*

Introduction

Hyperpigmentation is a common, usually harmless condition that involves darkening of an area of skin caused by increased deposits of melanin, the brown pigment that produces normal skin color. Hyperpigmentation can affect the skin color of people of any race.

Age or "liver" spots from sun damage are a common form of hyperpigmentation.

Melasma or chloasma spots are larger areas of darkened skin that appear most often as a result of hormonal changes. Pregnancy, for example, can trigger overproduction of melanin that causes the "mask of pregnancy" on the face and darkened skin on the abdomen and other areas. Women who take birth control pills may also develop hyperpigmentation. Skin diseases such as acne may leave dark spots after the condition clears. Other causes of dark spots are injuries to the skin, including some surgeries. Freckles are small brown spots that can appear anywhere on the body, but are most common on the face and arms. Freckles are an inherited characteristic.

Freckles, age spots, and other darkened skin patches can become darker or more pronounced when skin is exposed to the sun. This happens because melanin absorbs the energy of the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays in order to protect the skin from overexposure. The usual result of this process is skin tanning, which tends to darken areas that are already hyperpigmented. Wearing a sunscreen is a must. The sunscreen must be "broad spectrum" (i.e., it blocks both UVA and UVB). A single day of excess sun can undo months of treatment.

Allopathic treatments involve treating the local problem with various ointments and lasers. Most prescription creams used to lighten the skin contain hydroquinone. Bleaches lighten and fade darkened skin patches by slowing the production of melanin so those dark spots gradually fade to match normal skin coloration. Prescription bleaches contain twice the amount of hydroquinone, the active ingredient, as over-the-counter skin bleaches. In more severe cases prescription creams with tretinoin and a cortisone cream may be used. These may be somewhat irritating to sensitive skin and will often take three to four months to produce improvement.

There are now several highly effective laser treatments. The q-switched ruby and other pigmented lesion lasers often remove pigment without scarring. A test spot in an inconspicuous place will need to be done as they sometimes aggravate the condition rather than improve it.

Whatever the cause, hyperpigmentation can be an embarrassing cosmetic concern when it occurs on the face. In some cases, after using different depigmenting treatments for a long period of time, the darkening becomes worse and can become almost incurable by modern medicines. In these cases homeopathy can be extremely effective in permanently resolving the condition.

Patient Information

Mrs. V.D., a 62-year-old female, visited our clinic on June 27th, 2013, complaining of blackish discoloration of the face, neck, chest and hands for the last two years with slight itching. Before that time, she had a few brownish spots on her face which she treated with a variety of topical prescription creams, but the discoloration of the face progressed with itching and spread to the neck, chest and both hands. She had consulted various other skin specialists in different cities without relief. Finally, as a last resort, she consulted with me, though she admitted that she had little belief in homeopathy.

She also described ringing in both ears with partial deafness for fifteen years which began after chronic episodes of suppurative otitis media for which she was treated with antibiotics.

Past Medical History

Cataract operation three years ago. Bilateral ear myringoplasties for chronic otitis media (twelve years ago on the right side, one year ago on the left)

Family History

Mother: Ischemic heart disease

Father: Expired in 2004 from acute myocardial infarction

Generalities and Symptoms

General appearance: stout with round face.
Thirst: increased with dryness in mouth.
Appetite: good
Desires: salt
Aversions: none. Addictions: none
Eliminations: normal bowel movements
Perspiration: normal
Urination: normal
Thermals: hot
Sleep: good
Face: blackish discoloration.

Mind

She was very sensitive to noise. She had many different collections. She was very much interested in making verses. Artistic nature, liked to draw paintings.

Physical examination: unremarkable

Rubrics based on totality of symptoms

1. Mind: Sensitive, to noise.
2. Mind: Collects, many things.
3. Mind: Verses, making.
4. Mind: Art, ability for
5. Generals: Food and drinks; salt, desire
6. Mouth: Dryness; thirst, with
7. Mouth: Discoloration; tongue, black
8. Face: Discoloration, black
9. Ears: Noises in; ringing

Diagnosis: Hyperpigmentation; chronic progressive

Homeopathic Analysis: Miasm: Psoro-Sycotic

Although *China* and *Sulphur* came up strongly in the repertorization, I chose *Chininum sulphuricum* because it is similar to *China* (tinnitus, skin discoloration, artistic nature) but it also expressed the *Sulphur* aspects of the patient especially the itching of the skin and the fact that she was hot thermally. A review of Clarke's materia medica also showed that *Chininum sulphuricum* covered this patient's deafness more strongly than either *China* or *Sulphur* alone.

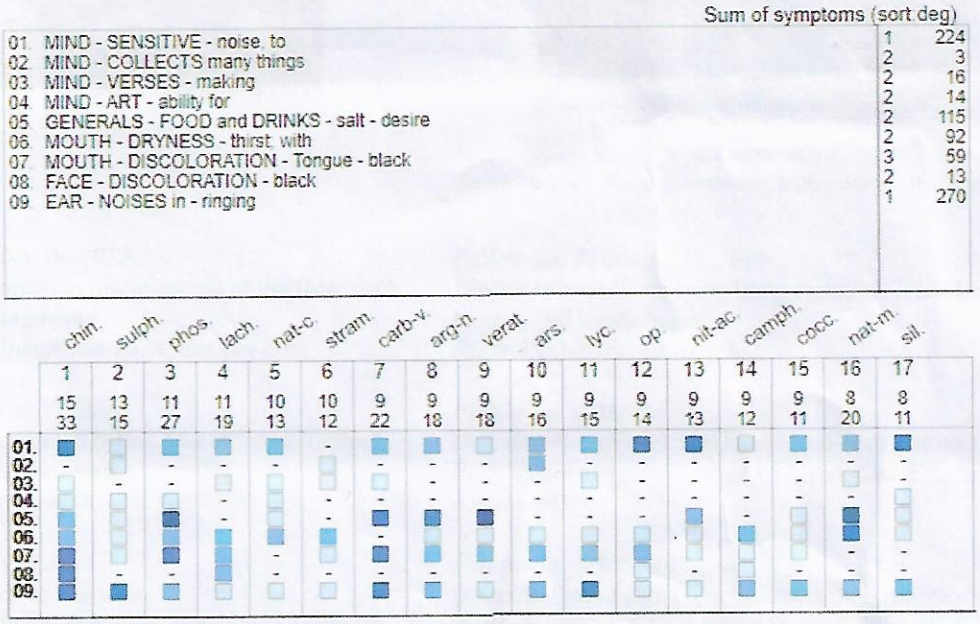
Plan: *June, 27, 2013*
Chininum sulphuricum 200c, one dry dose. Sac lac for one month.

Follow-up: July 28, 2013
Itching improved the day after the remedy was taken. No change in discoloration.
Assessment/Plan: Because the itching had improved, it was decided to wait.Sac lac for one month.

Follow-up: August 8, 2013
No itching. No change in discoloration
Assessment/Plan: Itching had resolved but there was no change in discoloration. *Chininum sulphuricum* 1m, one dry dose. Sac lac for one month.

Follow-up: September 9, 2013
No itching. Discoloration of face was slightly better.
Plan: Sac lac for one month.

Follow-up: *October 30, 2013*
No itching. Discoloration of face continued to improve.
Plan: Sac lac for one month.



Serial photographs of the patient appear at the end of this article.

27 June 2013

30 August 2014

2 December 2016

4 January 2018
Taken recently during a meeting with author after two years.

Follow-up: November 30, 2013
Continued improvement in discoloration of the face; neck and hands slightly improved.
Plan: Chininum sulphuricum 10 M, one dry dose

Follow-up: December 31, 2013
Discoloration of face much better. Discoloration of neck and hands better than last visit.
Plan: Sac lac for one month

Follow-up: January 1, 2014
Discoloration similar to last visit.
Plan: Chininum sulphuricum 50m, one dose. Sac lac for one month.

Follow-up: February 28, 2014
Discoloration of face completely resolved. Discoloration of neck and hands better.
Plan: Sac lac for one month.

Follow-up: 3/3/2014
Discoloration of neck and hands similar to last visit.
Plan: Chininum sulphuricum CM, one dose. Sac lac for one month

Follow-up: 8/30/2014
Discoloration of skin (face, hands, neck) completely resolved.

Follow-ups on February 12, 2016 and April 1, 2018 continued to show no recurrence of hyperpigmentation.

Discussion

Homeopathic *Chininum sulphuricum* in different potencies resolved a case of hyperpigmentation of the skin that had not responded to allopathic prescriptions. While a single case is not sufficient to prove the efficacy of homeopathy in hyperpigmentation, further studies and/or case reports are needed.

About author: Dr. Vijay Dabhade is professor and teacher of the "Organon of Medicine" at P.D. Jain Homoeopathic Medical College, Parbhani in Maharashtra state, India. He has been practicing classical homeopathy for 25 years. He can be reached at:drvijayhomoeopath@gmail.com

AJH