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DEE MCLAUGHLIN

SEPARATION AND RETURN – A CASE

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A B S I N T H I U M

RENÉ DOCKX & GUY KOKELENBERG

ACUTE ASTHMA REMEDIES

EDWARD WHITMONT

OPENING DOORS

BOB FORDHAM & RAJESH SHAH

A N A N T H E R U M

JEREMY SHERR

CEREUS BONPLANDII – THE GOOD PLANT

ANANTHERUM

In this paper we present three cases¹ treated successfully with the little-known remedy, *Anantherum muricatum*, one of the few grasses in our materia medica

Clarke² lists hydrophobia, syphilis and syphilis as falling within the clinical range of this remedy, so we can anticipate a deeply acting medicine.

CW, FEMALE, 8 YEARS OLD
18TH JANUARY 1990

I saw this child alone initially, with her mother waiting just outside the consulting room. C drew her chair a little closer to my desk and began a hesitantly, but with slowly gaining assurance. I was somewhat taken aback by the open and candid way in which the story was told. There was also an air of puzzlement: a child trying to articulate baffling and disturbing thoughts which seemed to stretch her understanding to the limit. I try to reproduce it here in a way which conveys the sense as I first heard it.

I've got friends. We fight ... not very often. I've had thoughts about a man. I've had awful thoughts about him and me and my private parts – about a man coming into my bed and hurting my private parts. I think every man is going to. I can push the thoughts away, but they sometimes come back. I'm not sure if they are dreams or just thoughts. People I meet I think are going to do things to me.

I've a little brother of two. Once when he was jumping around in bed I thought he was going to make love to me – just for a minute. I know he's not, because he's very little.

Sometimes I think someone is going to do it to mum – she's got a new boyfriend – it just comes into my head sometimes.

I think a man is going to do something awful to me, like whip me.

I see something. I think it's

going to hurt me. Like that tree (points to a tree outside the window) – it looks like spikes.

I think someone stripped me – though I don't know what they ... I don't know, I'm only eight. That comes later.

Things come up and I don't want to say because they're about nice people – like my aunt and uncle – probably because I found out about love and all these thoughts came into my head. Mum doesn't keep things from me. When mum had a baby I read a book about babies. I was staying with a friend. I said shall we do that? (Embarrassed laugh). I don't know. I didn't really know about it.

I directed her back to the fights she mentioned.

Thought someone was going to beat me up. I worry about things on TV: making love and beating-up. Whenever I look I think something is going to poke me in my private parts. Sometimes I think someone is going to kill me.

She went on to talk about the deaths of her grandmother and grandfather.

My family is all jumbled-up because mum and dad split up.

When I was little, with some friends, some other girls. They played with my private parts and I played with theirs. One day mum found out and said: 'Don't, you could hurt yourselves.'

Sometimes I think about boys coming in and kissing me ... I pretend and play with myself.

MOTHER'S STORY

Bedwetting. Sleeps very deeply. Can't stay at friends' houses.

She's been psychologically disturbed of late. About her sexual-

ity. She's very persistent – one idea – and blow it up and blow it up. A friend has been feeding her imagination with all this stuff. She's very honest, she tells it all. After the split-up, things settled quite a bit and then the fears came out.

Tantrums. She'll fix on something and blow. She'll want to wear something and go wild – blow – quick. The whole works. She'll scream and shout. It's explosive and then gone

We discussed the episode of masturbation. C's mother said that she had inserted foreign bodies into her vagina and that she – the mother – had become concerned about this.

DISCUSSION

Elimination of sexual abuse with this history was important. I felt reassured after discussing this issue with the child's mother. One of the hallmarks of abuse was definitely absent from this case: there was no attempt to hide the scenarios which were described.

Subsequently it was revealed that the child's mother and uncle suffered from disabling hypochondriacal anxiety and that her uncle had committed suicide as a result of this. Her mother lived in fear of doing the same.

The family history of mental illness appeared sufficient to explain the child's history. Accordingly I treated the information as presented.

Here we have a child with a sexual awareness in advance of her years. This has resulted in potentially injurious episodes of masturbation. I understood the delusions of injury to be a protective reaction preventing the child from taking this activity to an extreme. Rubrics pertaining to injury yielded little. Another important aspect of the case then occurred to me: the repetition of the

central idea by the child coupled with the mother's description. I used the rubrics Masturbation and Monomania from Kunzli's *Repertory* which gives only one remedy, *Anantherum*.

Allen³ gave the following information: "Disposition to anger... quarrelsome and contrary humour, but after being angry he often regrets what he has done; Comatose sleep; Incontinence of urine... at night in bed." In Clarke⁴: "... as of steel arrows from forehead to nape."

Rx *Anantherum* 30c, the only potency I could find!

After a month the patient was much improved. Only two episodes of "the thoughts". Mother described her as much more calm and relaxed. Bedwetting better, has stayed at a friend's house.

This patient continued to improve without need for repetition of the remedy and up to December 1992 has remained in good health.

MISS DN, AGE 19 YEARS 29TH JUNE 1992

Bronchial asthma, episodes every 15 days since age 2. Aggravated by: draft, grapes, oranges, curd, cold drinks. With steroids episodes last 3-4 days. Whooping cough in the past, family history of bronchial asthma.

Severe cough, episodes of bronchitis last up to ten days. Dry, spasmodic cough < talking, lying down, night, exertion.+++

This patient is well-built, somewhat flabby in appearance. She has a poor appetite, desires sour food++5. Gets hurt easily+++ and weeps++ both < before menses.

This patient appeared charming, a little shy. Anger+++ was very marked, back answers to anybody; < if refused anything she wants, being scolded+, trifles++. She is a tutor and will even strike her students. Strikes brother or sister when angry+++ , will pull her brother's hair. Quarrelsome++ "She'll quarrel with a three year old child!" says her mother.

DISCUSSION

The following rubrics represent the case: Quarrelsome, Aversion to Company, Excitable, Cheerful. On searching Allen's *Encyclopaedia*⁶: "Disposition to anger, with desire to strike and destroy." The respiratory symptoms are well represented.

Anantherum shows itself here to be a

very deep-acting remedy. Symptoms correspond to severe asthmatic attacks and to advanced pulmonary tuberculosis.

Rx *Anantherum* 200, two doses. Prescribed on 29th June and 29th July. Same given tds during August during two acute episodes.

From August to December 1992 the remedy was repeated three times. Only one mild cough in that time.

MISS SR, AGE 13 YEARS 11TH SEPTEMBER 1992

Involuntary micturition, two or three times a day and once a night. Has had these symptoms since birth. Does not realise that she has passed urine. Odour of urine offensive. Treatment by psychiatrist, paediatrician and urologist has proved ineffective. All investigations (including IVP and Cystogram) are normal. Uncle, cousin and brother all have problems with enuresis

She is a lean, tall child. Desire for oily++ and sour++ food.

Perspiration stains yellow. Sleepiness++ from 2-5pm; sleeps 10pm-7am with legs drawn up++. Facial acne.

She is a poor mixer, likes to be alone. Egotism:

I do not like to meet with everybody, only smart girls.

Feels she is given less importance in the family, but the consultation revealed that she was very much loved by all of them. Dislikes noise and crowds. Weeps easily++

Anger++: pushes and hits her brother. Strikes with anger.+++

Weeps after anger. Hot tempered++:

Not the yielding type. She tries to prove herself right.

Absent-minded+++:

If she is asked to get potatoes, she will get tomatoes!

DISCUSSION

The totality of this case is represented by the rubrics: Jealousy, Egotism, Aversion to company. There is anger with striking, as in the previous case. Symptoms of enuresis are found in Allen (op.cit.).

Rx *Anantherum* 30c repeated two-weekly, then three-weekly until the end of November by which time the enuresis had decreased to once per week. There had been a spell of two weeks without any episode. Emotionally, much improved. Spells of weeping much less at the end of this time.

Cases two and three were analysed

using the Phenomenological Approach⁷. Space does not permit a detailed explanation of this approach here. However, the following phenomena were given special attention:

Anger with striking

Anger with quarrelsome ness

This led me to think of a remedy, *Anantherum*, which covered the totality so beautifully.

My understanding of the remedy leads me to suggest its use in children's temper tantrums, similar to *Tuberculinum*.

REPERTORY ADDITIONS

Anantherum has only 36 entries in the *Synthetic Repertory*, to which the following clinically verified symptoms may be added:

Striking

Striking, anger from

Anger alternating with quick repentance

Searching Allen³, the following additions to the mind section of the repertory were found:

Anxiety for the future

Dullness, drunken as if

Fancies, exaltation of

Fear of death, pain from

Hypochondriasis, dread of society, with (new rubric)

Indifference (Apathy)

Weeps easily

NOTES

- 1 Due to lack of time, only the first case was presented at the conference. It was felt useful to incorporate information from three cases in this written account. The first case is from Bob Fordham, the others from Rajesh Shah. We discuss the approach to case analysis separately.
- 2 John Henry Clarke (1925) *A Dictionary of Practical Materia Medica*. Third Edition. Health Science Press
- 3 Timothy Field Allen (1874) *The Encyclopaedia of Pure Materia Medica*. Reprinted 1988, Jain, New Delhi
- 4 Clarke, op. cit
- 5 '+' indicates strength of symptoms
- 6 Allen op. cit
- 7 Dr Rajesh Shah, seminars in UK in May 1992. See also *My Experiences with Ferrum Metallicum* (1992) Shree publishers, Bombay. There is some discussion of this approach in Rajesh's book (reviewed later in this journal).