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Inflammation & Homoeopathy

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Abstract

Previously, one use to think inflammation as external phenomena but currently with the advent of Non Communicable Diseases and metabolic diseases, inflammation has become an internal process. The internality of inflammation leads to deciphering of the process and inflammatory pathways.

The current article discusses supplements and the modern medicine approaches to deal with inflammation and brings out the lacunae in the processes to deal with inflammation. It is here that homoeopathy chips in as a clinical and cost effective approach. The article aspires that the homoeopathic therapeutic system is integrated to deal with inflammation and the related diseases through the Universal Health Coverage domain.

Key Words- Inflammatory Pathway, Homoeopathy, Miasm, Infection

Introduction

Inflammation is a fundamental biological response essential for tissue defense and repair. Proper regulation protects the body from infections, injuries and harmful stimuli. When it is chronic, it may lead to serious health issues and accelerate the ageing process. On one hand, acute inflammation is protective and necessary and on the other hand, chronic inflammation causes continuous tissue damage and contributes to chronic diseases.¹⁻⁴

These diseases are arthritis, cardiovascular diseases, strokes, diabetes, cancer and neurodegenerative diseases. Arthritis is due to persistent joint inflammation that results in pain, stiffness and joint damage. Thus pain & functional impairment occurs in arthritis. Similarly, inflammation of blood vessels leads to atherosclerosis, heart attacks and if the attack is on vessels of the brain, it leads to strokes. Thus plaque formation is central to inflammation. Further, chronic inflammation impairs insulin signaling that leads to Insulin Resistance and Type 2 diabetes. Hence, inflammatory processes lead to metabolic disturbances like diabetes. Inflammation can promote tumor growth and metastasis by creating an environment conducive to cancer cell survival. Here also chronic inflammation triggers cancer progression thus affecting treatment outcomes. In case of neurodegenerative diseases, chronic inflammation in the brain is linked to Alzheimer's and Parkinson's diseases. Here again, inflammation in the nervous system is linked to such diseases.¹⁻⁴

Cancer when treated with chemotherapy weakens the immune system, causes low neutrophil counts in peripheral blood picture thus inviting inflammation and related complications. Such cases need comprehensive care to address both aerobic and anaerobic infections, targeted inflammatory pathway management, focusing on specific inflammatory pathways towards reduction of further damage to tissues in the body. Through this process, desirable outcomes can be obtained. It is here in cases of 'neutropenia' that homoeopathy can chip in as an effective strategy.¹⁻⁴

Here, it is crucial to manage chronic inflammation so that long term damage is addressed and overall health is promoted. Judicious use of supplements especially dietary is an effective strategy. These include dietary supplements in vitamins like D, B12 & A. In cases of minerals, use of Zinc, Copper & Iron are crucial. Further, healthy fats like Ω 3,6,9 & phytic supplements balances inflammatory responses. Here, it is equally important to note that excessive use of these supplements also induces inflammation. These should be used only if there is a deficiency of these supplements in the body at that point of time.¹⁻⁴

Life style or physiological interventions like regular exercise, balanced diet, stress management modulates inflammation. Further, targeted therapies through application of biological like Tumor Necrosis Factor (TNF) & InterLeukin (IL) 6 blockers address inflammatory components and provides relief from chronicity of inflammations.¹⁻⁴

The two 'I's

Inflammation & Infection are two sides of the damage coin. When there is an exaggerated immune response to inflammation, sepsis occurs as a result of the invading infection. Thus, widespread tissue damage, organ failure & eventually death occur. Therefore managing sepsis is crucial. When the appropriate antibiotic therapy fails to respond because of Anti Microbial Resistance (AMR), homoeopathy can offer solace to such critical cases.¹⁻⁴

The IP

Inflammatory Pathways (IP) are intricate networks of proteins & cellular interactions that initiates & catalyses the Inflammatory Response (IR) in the body. Given below are some of the critical pathways.¹⁻⁴

The first is Toll Like Receptor (TLR). This pathway is essential for recognizing pathogens and to initiate immune response. The next is Nuclear Factor Kappa B (NFkB) that regulates immune responses, cell growth and survival. Next is Mitogen Activated Protein Kinase (MAP Kinase) that gets involved in cellular responses to stress and inflammation. The next one is Janus Kinase Signal Transducer & Activator of Transcription (JAK-STAT) that mediates signals of cytokines that are involved in inflammation & immune responses in the body. The Arachidonic Acid Pathway (AAP) causes pain during inflammation. The last one is Chronic Inflammation Pathway (CIP).¹⁻⁴

These pathways are activated by various externalities like bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites & other substances that are foreign to the body. These lead to production of inflammatory cytokines & mediators that supports in the process of infection fighting & tissue repairing in the body.¹⁻⁴

The roles of supplements help to reduce inflammatory pathways & also the associated inflammations along with the major inflammation. When inflammation is associated with pain, it is the AAP in action. The AAP is managed by Cyclooxygenase 1 (COX 1) inhibitors like 'Aspirin'. However, it does not address all types of chronic inflammation. Again here homoeopathy has an effective role to play.¹⁻⁴

To address CIP, Vitamin D is very effective. The vitamin provides support to the body in the regulation of multiple inflammatory pathways and mediators. It is a broad spectrum option that is available to manage inflammation. Similarly, here also homoeopathy has a very important & effective service to offer.¹⁻⁴

Homoeopathy in inflammation

In homoeopathic therapeutics, acute inflammation is 'Psoric' in origin. Psoric miasm causes functional disorders only. Miasms are disease causing dynamic influences that are infectious in nature. When the inflammation progresses to next stage or sub acute stage, the miasm is 'Sycotic' in origin. The Sycotic miasm causes proliferation in the body. As the inflammation becomes chronic and starts damaging tissues, the miasm is 'Syphilitic'. Syphilitic miasm causes destruction of tissues in the body. Similarly, if the inflammation causes weight loss & lethargy and makes the constitution of the person very thin, the prevailing miasm is 'Tubercular'. The homoeopath has to choose the anti miasmatic medicine depending upon the prevailing miasm in the body.⁵⁻¹⁴

Given below are the list of therapeutics as homoeopathic medicines as per the inflammatory pathways mentioned above.⁵⁻¹⁴

To deal with the TLR pathway, medicines like 'Echinacea', 'Azadirachta Indica', 'Leucas Aspera', 'Golondrina', 'Arnica', 'Calendula', can be prescribed. These are blood purifiers and these medicines modulate initial cellular response.

To deal with NFkB pathway, medicines like 'Apis', 'Arnica', 'Hepar Sulph', 'Lachesis', 'Merc Iod Ruber', 'Rhustox', 'Silicea'.

Medicines required for MAP Kinase pathway are 'Cortisone', 'Hydro Cortisone', 'Ocimum Sanctum', 'Hypericum', 'Avena Sativa', 'Terminalia Chebula', 'Embelica Officinalis', 'Terminalia Batterica', 'Scopolaminum', 'Resorcinum', 'Acidum Galicum'.

Medicines that can deal with JAK-STAT pathway are 'Curcuma Longa', 'Golondrina', 'Leucas Aspera', 'Amoora Rohitika', 'Colchicininum', 'Sanguinarinum', 'Prednisolone', 'Hydrocortisone', 'Spiritus Aetheris Nitrosi'.

The AAP pathway needs medicines like 'Pyrogen', 'Hepar Sulph', 'Chamomilla', 'Aconitinum', 'Emetinum', 'Aspirin', 'Staphylocin', 'Renine'.

For CI pathway, medicines like 'Silicea', 'Tuberculinum', 'Calcarea Carb', 'Veratrum Viride', 'Lycopodium', 'Zincum Metallicum', 'Iodum', 'Oleum Jec Aselli', 'Choramphenicol', 'Vitamin D', 'Sterogyl'.

As mentioned above, minerals like 'Zinc', 'Copper' & 'Iron' are crucial. Here, in homoeopathy, medicines like 'Zincum Met-3X', 'Cuprum Met-3X' & 'Ferrum Met-3X' can be prescribed.

As mentioned above, chemotherapy leads to 'Neutropenia' in cancer patients treated with homoeopathy. These neutropenic cases need medicines like 'Medicago Sativa', 'Bismuth', 'Cadmium Sulph', 'Ipecac'.

As mentioned above, Sepsis or Infection and chronic Inflammation go together. Medicines for sepsis are 'Septicimin', 'Sulphur Hydrogenisatum', 'Toxoplasmosis Gondi', 'Pyrogen' can be prescribed.

Among Bowel Nosodes, 'Morgan Pure' can be prescribed as it addresses congestion which is inevitable in inflammation.

Similarly, if the homoeopath finds 'Sulphur' as the similimum, the bowel nosode 'Morgan Pure' is to be prescribed along with the similimum. If 'Sepia' is the similimum, the bowel nosode 'Faecalis'. In case of 'Pulsatilla', 'Mutabile' is to be prescribed. In case of 'Natrum Mur', 'Proteus Bach' is to be prescribed. In case of 'Lycopodium', 'Bacillus Gartner' is to be prescribed. In case of 'Pyrogen', 'Coccal Co' is to be prescribed. In case of 'Thuja', 'Sycotic Compound' is to be prescribed. In case of 'Silicea' & 'Phosphorus', 'Gartner Bach' is to be prescribed. In case of 'Arsenic', the bowel nosode 'Dysentery Compound' is to be prescribed.

As inflammation leads to fear and anxiety in the patient, the Bach Flower remedy 'Cherry Plum', 'Mimulus', 'Vervain' and 'White Chestnut' are to be prescribed.

It is to be noted here that in case of inflammation, a constitutional drug, a specific drug depending on the prevalent path way, a bowel nosode and a bach flower remedy are to be prescribed in frequent doses for a short period of time in acute inflammation. Similarly for sub acute inflammation, all these four groups of indicated medicines are to be prescribed in three doses daily for a moderate period of time. In the same way, all these medicines are to be prescribed twice daily doses for a optimum period for chronic inflammations.

Along with these, the medicines related to supplements are to be prescribed to deal with inflammation and its related complications.

Integration of homoeopathy into the domain of Universal Health Coverage will not only catalyze the AYUSH systems but also benefit the masses as homoeopathy is cost effective, clinically effective and has no side effects. The projected population in India is currently 1500 millions and 15 million use homoeopathy currently.¹⁵⁻²⁰

As projected by large scale health surveys like National Family Health Surveys, the prevalence of Non Communicable Diseases is surging and these are chronic inflammations that are harboring in the body. Homoeopathic integration will only help reduce this burden in the country.¹⁵⁻²⁰

It is equally important to note that integration of homoeopathy will add the personalized medical approach to deal with inflammation as homoeopathy is an individualized system of medicine.²

Conclusion

Inflammation is a cross cutting phenomenon across so many disorders, it becomes an obstacle in the path to deal with these disorders. Understanding the entire phenomenon through the Inflammatory Pathways (IP) will only smooth the process of dealing with inflammation.

The article brought out the limitations of modern medicine to deal with the chronic inflammations and acute inflammations that are viral in nature. This is where homoeopathy comes into the picture with the properties like clinically effective, cost effective and no side effects. The system of medicine can cover masses while dealing with the menace of inflammation across the nation.

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Conflict of Interest

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