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Chronic Fatigue Syndrome.

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What is it? This is the current name for the syndrome characterized by debilitating fatigue and a variety of associated physical, constitutional, and psychological complaints. In the past, persons labeled with varied diagnoses like neurasthenia, effort syndrome, post-viral fatigue syndrome, epidemic neuromyasthenia, etc., probably had the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, as defined by the U. S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Who would suffer from it? Women are twice as likely to suffer from it as men are. The patients are usually in the age-group 25-45 years, though cases in childhood and middle age are described.

What causes it? There are numerous theories and hypotheses about the cause of the syndrome. *Viruses* have been blamed since this syndrome often follows a variety of acute infections. It is however unlikely that they contribute to its long term features.

Numerous subtle *immunologic disturbances* have been reported in patients with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. These are not specific for this syndrome, nor do all the patients have these findings. Recent controlled studies of patients have documented *abnormalities in endocrine function*. These neuro-endocrine abnormalities may contribute to the impaired energy and mood of the patients.

Mild to moderate depression is evident in two-thirds of patients. Thus, some believe that chronic fatigue syndrome is a *psychiatric disorder* and that the various neuro-endocrine and immune disturbances arise secondarily.

What are the symptoms? The symptoms appear suddenly in a previously active individual. A flu-like illness or an acute stress is often recalled as the triggering event. This is followed by an unbearable exhaustion. Other symptoms such as headache, sore throat, muscle and joint aches, tender lymph nodes and feverishness, lead to the belief that an infection persists. Over several weeks the other features of the syndrome become evident- disturbed sleep, difficulty in concentration and depression.

The diagnosis of chronic fatigue syndrome is more by exclusion of other illnesses. A thorough history, a complete physical examination, and judicious use of the laboratory will help to rule out other illnesses. No laboratory test can diagnose or measure the severity of this condition.

Can Homeopathy help? The homeopathic system believes in treating the patient who has the disease and not the disease in the patient. Hence, it is more likely to help such cases. The constitutional remedy selected on the basis of a detailed history and examination would bring the patient back to normal activity. Apart from the deep

acting constitutional remedies like *Phosphorus*, *Lycopodium*, *Pulsatilla*, *Nux vomica* and *Sepia*, the other remedies that may help in tackling the fatigue are:

Kali phos: This is the chief Biochemic "nerve salt," and is found in the brain cells and nerve fluids, and the intercellular fluids. It is useful for patients with despondency, anxiety, fearfulness, weak memory, mental decay, mental and physical breakdown, neurasthenia, hypochondriasis, hysteria, insomnia, night terrors, irritability, insanity and paralysis. This salt has proved curative in nervousness, neurasthenia, anxiety, depression, brain-fag, loss of memory, sleeplessness, delirium tremens, horrors, dread, epileptic fits, and exhaustion.

Phosphoric acid: This remedy is to nervous debility what iron is to anemia, and it corresponds to that debility arising from continued grief, over- exertion of the mind, sexual excesses or any nervous strain on the body or mind. Indifference, apathy, and torpidity of body and mind characterize the remedy. There is burning in the spine and limbs and the patient is inclined to be drowsy and listless. Any attempt to study causes heaviness in the head and limbs. It suits also young, rapidly growing people, and especially cases of nervous depression from spermatorrhoea.

Gelsemium: A mainstay in this disease. Stupid, dull, unable to concentrate mind; vertigo, dull ache at base of brain. Lacks self-confidence. Sudden emotions bring on diarrhoea or indigestion.

Picric acid: Corresponds well to the brain fag of businessmen who become depressed and wearied from slight fatigue. It is a mental inactivity, with a desire to lie down and rest. The great characteristic is that slight exertion brings on exhaustion and headache, incapacitating for work, and extinguishes that quality which we call grit. Even the slightest mental exertion causes heavy feelings and a sensation of heat. The headache may be frontal or occipital and extended down the spine, in fact, the head symptoms seems to be concentrated in the occiput. Sexual irritability may be a prominent symptom. In the morning there is a tired aching in the lumbar region, the legs are heavy and weak with the soreness of the muscles and joints.

Avena sativa: Has a selective action on brain and nervous system, favorably influencing their nutritive function. Weakness of nerves, tired brain, irritability, gets excited at least thing. Urine has excess of phosphates, history of sexual excesses and occipital headache. Best tonic for debility after exhausting diseases. Nerve tremors of the aged. Sleeplessness in alcoholics. This remedy will calm and strengthen the nerves.

Note: *A detailed history followed by constitutional treatment by a good and qualified homoeopath is necessary to treat the complaints that appear during any disease. It is not advisable to resort to self-medication for any disease. The above mentioned drugs are just a few of the remedies and are mentioned solely to create awareness about the efficacy of homeopathic medicines in chronic fatigue syndrome.*

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