

High blood pressure

Carmel Casserley advises
on a holistic approach
to treatment



Blood pressure refers to the measured pressure in the circulatory system. The latter consists of arterial blood “pumped” by the heart delivering oxygen and other nutrients to the organs and tissues, and venous blood which returns “used” blood back to the lungs to release carbon dioxide and receive oxygen. The kidneys filter materials and salts, mainly sodium. This heart-lung-kidney mechanism must be kept in good working order to maintain health. Diet and exercise are of utmost importance in the prevention of heart, lung and kidney disease. It does not take our modern medicine to tell us this. Hahnemann, the founder of modern homeopathic medicine, wrote at length on the absolute importance of diet in the prevention of chronic disease. His instructions were enlightened – albeit severe – no spices, salt, tea, coffee etc and he advocated pure food grown as close to nature as possible. He laboured the importance of exercise,

moderate where necessary. But most of all his emphasis was on the removal of stressful factors and resting when necessary. We have added nothing to his directions.

Diet

Diet should be as near organic as possible. Organic foods are balanced foods absorbing nutrients in proportions and at a pace intended by nature. When forced to behave in ways not intended, nature can hit back in relentless ways. For example food grown in soil containing too much aluminium due to acid rain, nitrates from industrial waste, or artificial nitrogen to force growth, can have devastating effects on the human body causing fine “scratch” marks in the arteries around which plaques can gather cholesterol and other material causing atheromatous patches. These are weak areas, which can rupture and leak causing strokes. This is especially so where blood pressure is raised.

Strong tea, coffee and nicotine, as well as causing emotional stress cause stimulation of the delicate arterial musculature. After a while this will cause hardening of the structure. Pressure increases inside the soft pliable arteries and hardening of the arteries occurs. This shows up in older people especially. It is a shame to speed up the process from youth and the middle years due to ignorance and/or neglect.

Now at last, we are recognising the importance of salt in our diet. Salt (sodium chloride) is hygroscopic – it absorbs fluid into itself. If salt is put into a dish in a damp atmosphere it will become damp and wet. (This is why anti-caking agents must be added to keep the salt dry and running, therefore easier to pour.) Salt works the same way in the body’s system.

Salt retention

The kidneys and skin regulate salt secretion via the sweat. After a while, they can only handle so much and become

overloaded. The salt becomes retained in the system and pressure increases. Salt can move out of the blood stream into the tissues, some being excreted in the sweat. Perspiration often tastes very salty. Tissues and organs which are “salted up” are not functioning to capacity. Some of the symptoms which may occur are palpitations in the heart, pins and needles in the hands and feet, and fluid retention – “swelling up” before periods. It is marvellous how when homeopathic medicines are correctly prescribed and salt is balanced, PMT is cured. Salt with its attendant fluid retention can pressure the magnesium and calcium out of the microscopic tissue cells leading to cramps/spasms (homeopathic Mag phos rarely fails to cure the abdominal cramps of PMT).

salt.” Salt is a commercial ploy. Nobody would eat a second helping of say, baked beans, if there were not salt in it. It is not the baked beans we are craving but the salt in them. How many people can eat one crisp? Most devour the whole packet.

Commercial interests know full well that extra amounts will be consumed if the food is salted. Salt damages the taste buds and a dry mouth occurs. It is quite amazing to note that when homeopathic remedies are prescribed the body gives up its salt (and subsequently the blood pressure comes down). Most foods then can taste too salty. There is salt in almost everything – sausages, meat, chocolate, even some fizzy drinks. Hahnemann would have his work cut out for him today. His directive, however, as in all homeopathic

pathic medicines needed are the ones corresponding to these individually:

- Agitation may need Ars alb
- Fear may need Aconite
- Anxiety may need Arg nit
- Anger may need Nux vomica
- Resentment may need Staphysagria
- Grief may need Ignatia
- Black depression may need Aurum met

All of these medicines must carefully fit the patient’s picture.

Homeopathic medicine has always been with us. It was Hahnemann’s specific contribution to show the importance of the mental and emotional symptoms in treating the patient.

Exercise

This must be graded to the individual. Where blood pressure is raised, exercise must be carefully undertaken and supervised bearing in mind the chronicity or otherwise of the blood pressure. Sometimes, it is safer to alter diet and prescribe homeopathically well before prescribing exercise. Weight reduction causes less work for the system as a whole. Exercise especially in fresh air helps the intake of oxygen and opens up sluggish arteries which helps venous blood return, improving oxygen intake and so on.

Blood pressure

This is the measurement of the pressure in the system, the upper level (systolic) caused by the “pump” or cardiac pressure. The lower figure (diastolic) refers to the pressure left in the system (caused by hard versus soft arteries, and kidney



Eating a balanced diet of mainly organic food is essential for good health

We do not need to add salt to our diets. In Britain we are surrounded by high winds. Those winds lift the salt up out of the sea. We are breathing salty air in this climate. The UK has the highest intake of salt in Europe. Mediterranean countries use a lot of spice and little salt. We use very little spice at home and a lot of salt. “Salt craves more

prescribing will always be a constant unchanging truth. It is good to know that as medical fashion changes we have some eternal truths to help us follow a path to cure.

Emotional stress

This affects the production of chemical changes in the body leading to hypertension. The tension produced can lead to many varied emotions. Homeo-

competence) when this is relaxed. In young healthy adults normal blood pressure is 120-130/80-85. The recent "Health Survey of England" defines high blood pressure rather conservatively as a blood pressure of 160/95 (or being on anti-hypertensive drugs).

There are regional variations with a higher prevalence within the north of the country compared to the south. Some Indian tribes (for example the Yamomamo living in Venezuela) eat fruit, vegetables, nuts and occasional animal food. These adult men have an average blood pressure of 95/65. There is no rise with age – as in those populations in Western cultures.

Treating blood pressure homeopathically

Having advised on diet and exercise (where appropriate) plus relaxation techniques, the homeopathic prescription is best found when tailored to the individual constitutional make up of a person. The commonest medicine I have used is Sulphur. These are the warm-blooded people often loving clubs, pubs and parties. They are very personable and "make an entry" socially. They have good appetites, often like alcohol, are thirsty, liking long drinks eg cold beer. Despite being out late perhaps carousing, they waken bright and early and are often out again and on the go. They can be very untidy and not always charming to live with.

In my experience, they commonly go on to develop a Lachesis make up. They become loquacious, alcoholic or are on the way to becoming an alcoholic. They become very heavy-headed in the mornings on waking – also after a nap. They are losing control and becoming jealous and envious. Their

systolic and diastolic blood pressures are normally very high. Thrombosis in the left leg is common and may have already been treated. When Lachesis is indicated and prescribed it works very quickly. When kidneys are involved the diastolic is often raised more than a systolic reading. Lycopodium is almost specific here. It may need repeating at weekly intervals initially then the distance between needing it will begin to widen. When the diastolic figure settles, a truer constitutional picture may present itself eg Arsenicum alb or Causticum. Most patients will need a potency of salt itself (Nat mur 30c) at some stage. As well as unlocking the salt from the tissues it seems to fit a lot of

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cultural qualities of the people in these islands, for example the natural tendency to "bottle up" when under pressure especially in the middle and older years.

Aurum met is a wonderful blood pressure medicine. Modalities, once again, must fit the medicine. The cardiac muscle is under strain – perhaps even murmurs are present. A heavy brooding black depression is common. Palpitations are often very upsetting (more so than in Nat mur people). These are

often extremely worthy people who have given too much mentally and physically. Lesser medicines which can be useful are Convallaria 3x (one three times a day, ongoing), which keeps the arteries soft. Also Digitalis 30c if the heart has slowed appreciatively or 3x if the heart is irregular with missed beats.

Perhaps the most interesting medicine in the treatment of blood pressure is Crataegus. This is hawthorn. In times past it was common to see older men "chewing hawthorn". They knew its cardio-protective qualities. Crataegus "cleans up" the arteries removing the crustaceous matter stuck to their lining.

Many blood pressures are dangerously high and unresponsive to drugs or patients experience side effects. Drugs have come a long way since the days when the only treatment was a diuretic. They can be "effective" if only the blood pressure is involved. However, side effects are many and varied – from dizzy spells to nausea, headaches and so on. I never take anyone off drugs but aim to reduce the blood pressure while still on the drugs, to a level at which the patient's GP has to reduce or stop the drug treatment. It can be a very rewarding exercise. Blood pressure can be more difficult to treat if drugs are used as well. Homeopathy works but it can take longer. As Hahnemann pointed out, we are now treating not just the person but a person plus a drug picture. He would indeed have his work cut out for him today.

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Carmel Casserley
MB BCH FFHom
has recently retired
from her practice
in Lytham St
Anne's, Lancashire.