

PSYCHOSOMATISM

THE REDISCOVERY OF HOMOEOPATHY

Keywords:

Specificity hypothesis
Non specificity hypothesis.
Psycho neuroendocrine system (PNS)
Reticulo endothelial system
Dynamic plane.
Functional plane.
Emotional plane.

Introduction:

Two hundred years after its discovery, Homoeopathy is still looked with doubts by the people of scientific world and that for good reason, even if we ignore the controversy about the efficacy of the ultra molecular dosage of the potentised substance, its epistemological implication of Homoeopathy are too staggering for ready acceptance, they challenge some of our most cherished post artesian beliefs about the nature of biology and psychology functioning and their interrelationships. The paradise of a healthy body exposed by biology and medicine is still largely that of a physio chemical machine responding and successfully adapting its functioning. When this machine partly or wholly succumbs to such external or internal interference, illness is assumed to ensue. Let us unfold whether there is any theory or concept for evolution of disease exist with other system than Homoeopathy or not?

Eventually study is directed to focus on psychosomatism and Homoeopathy. Medicine has a long history but a slow evolution. Many theories / concepts have been formulated by many erudites / veteran scholars of different systems at different epoch of time from supernatural theories to multi factorial causes of disease of today's time. Apart from this there are may other concepts / theories for explaining the etiology / various conditions of illness. Homoeopathy has its own and psychosomatism has tis own. Let us study / unfold these two.

Literature Review:

The term psychosomatic disorder has no precise definition. Most often, the term is applied to physical disorders thought to be caused by psychologic factors. However, no physical disorder is caused exclusively by psychologic factors. Rather, a physical disorder has a necessary biologic component – a factor essential for the disease to occur.

In 1796 a new system of therapeutics the Homoeopath was discovered by Dr. Hahnemann where improtance was given to man as a whole and not only to its parts affected and state of the mind was called as a prime representative of an individual.

The term psychosomatic disorders was first of all used by Heinroth in 1888 to describe the disorders in which the psycho social factors are important. To explain those physical disorders due to psychological disorders two types of theories were put forward viz.

Speficity hypothesis
Non-speficity hypothesis

Specificity hypothesis: This theory led to personality studies of patients with peptic ulcers, coronary artery diseases and cancer. Till now the theory has no comprehensive explanation.

In 1910 Freud studied somatic involvement of psychological conflict and were particularly believed in conversion reaction in which a psychological problem is symbolically manifested physically. Although physiological tissue damage can not be demonstrated.

In 1936 Dunbar suggested a specific conscious personality picture associated with specific psychosomatic disorder.

Deustch (1939) and Greenacre (1949) believed that trauma before birth, infancy and childhood predisposes to psychosomatic diseases in adulthood.

In 1950 Garma stated that peptic ulcers have a specific psychological meaning.

Franz Alaxander who is regarded as a father of psychosomatic medicine gave his specificity hypothesis which state that if a specific environmental stress or emotional conflict occurs it results in a specific illness in a genetically predetermined organ. Alaxander described psychosomatic illnesses as follows :

Bronchial asthma

Ulcerative colitis.

Peptic ulcer

Migraine

Thyrotoxicosis.

Rheumatoid arthritis

Essential hypertension.

In 1958 F.Ruesch emphasized the importance of the interaction between patient and environment.

Rahe and Holmes showed that the life crisis often precedes illness.

J.Nemiah and Sifneos suggested that the patient who typically have inadequate involvement with their love objects as well as difficulty in finding words to describe their feelings tend to develop psychosomatic physical disorders. They called those patients as Alexithymic.

In 1977 George Engel gave a biopsychsocial model to express complex interaction between biological, psychological and social spheres resulting in a psychosomatic illness. This view point became widely popular and was accepted by a large number of psychiatrists.

Non-specific Theories:

Here it is thought that any stressful event can produce stress in an individual. This stress results in an internal work which is conventionally regarded as strain. The common causes of stress are death of loved one, divorce, financial burden. Psychological reaction to stress can leave to a failure of adaptive physiological responses which can result in a non specific cause of diseases. There are different views regarding the support of this theory:

a. Psychoneuroimmunology.

b. Withdrawal conservation.

a. Psychoneuroimmunology:

Many studies have been done to indicate possible links between stressful experiences and diseases. Stress can be defined as basically any outside force or pressure on a living organism that

causes atrophy in its normal physiological function. A stress responsive hormone called hydrocortisone is produced in a stressful environment. Hydrocortisone suppresses immunological responses and the hypothalamic regulation of the immune response in the thymus and lymph glands. Research conducted in Russia has shown that antibody responses are enhanced in animals when a specific region of the hypothalamus is electrically stimulated. Destruction of this region could lead to complete suppression of the primary antibody response. Thus the prolonged recovery from an illness could be prevented due to the lack of intact immune mechanisms. These studies imply the existence of a hormone that may be related to a human growth hormone produced by the anterior pituitary gland. Also another study consisted of mice being subjected to persistent forms of stress. The study resulted in the mice having enlarged adrenal glands; decreased white blood corpuscle counts, and decreased functioning of the spleen, thymus, and lymph glands. Also the study showed that the mice were more susceptible to a variety of infectious diseases. Any excess amount of stress makes an individual more prone to a malfunctioning of the immune system.

b. Withdrawal conservation:

Engel and co-workers showed that when an individual is threatened with loss, the metabolism does slow down. The individual withdraws, which has the effect on illness particularly infections.

Beginning from severe classical psychosomatic disorders described by Alexander the list of these disorders is increasing day by day with evidences. At present the list of psychosomatic ailments is virtually endless. The important and most common disorders of psychosomatic origin are as follows:

Cardiovascular Disorders

1. Essential hypertension.
2. Coronary artery disease
3. ICU delirium
4. Migraine.
5. Cerebrovascular diseases.

Eating Disorders

1. Anorexia nervosa.
2. Obesity.
3. Bulimia nervosa.

Endocrine Disorder

1. Diabetes mellitus
2. Hyperthyroidism
3. Cushing's syndrome
4. Pre menstrual tension and dysmenorrhoea.
5. Post menopausal syndrome.
6. Amenorrhoea.
7. Menorrhagia

Gastro-intestinal Disorders

1. Oesophageal reflux.
2. Peptic ulcers.
3. Irritable bowel syndrome
4. Ulcerative colitis.

5. Crohn's disease.

Immune Disorders

1. Auto immune disorders.
2. Allergies.
3. Viral infections.

Musculo-Skeletal Disorders

1. Rheumatoid arthritis.
2. SLE.

Respiratory Disorders

1. Bronchial asthma.
2. Hay fever.
3. Vasomotor rhinitis.
4. Hyperventilation syndrome.

Skin Disorders

1. Psoriasis.
2. Pruritus
3. Urticaria.
4. Alopecia areata.
5. Acne vulgaris
6. Psychogenic purpura
7. Trichotillomania
8. Dermatitis artefacta
9. Lichen planus.
10. Warts.

Common characteristics of Psychosomatic disorders:

It has been found that the psychosomatic disorders have certain common characteristics which are as follows.

- Emotion precipitate attacks of illness and the emotional changes can increase the severity of the illness.
- A co-relation has been observed between the occurrence of stressful life experience and the onset of these disorders or with recurrence of attacks during the course of the illness.
- Psychosomatic disorders exhibit a differential sex incidence. Asthma is twice more common in males than in females before puberty whereas it is more common in females than males after puberty.
- Psychosomatic disorders often run a phasic course.
- Most of the psychosomatic disorders show evidence of a genetic and constitutional predisposition.

Concept of evolution of disease from Homoeopathic stand point-

Let us visualize the evolution of disease from Homoeopathic stand point. Variegated forms and expressions of phenomenon of life are due to susceptibility. As we know that susceptibility is an

inherent quality of all the living being to react to a stimuli in the environment. It is a fundamental quality that distinguish a living being from non living things. It forms the very basis for the continued existence in the world and play an improtant role in maintenance of health, evolution of constitution, development of diathesis, development of disease manifestations, process of recovery and cure evolution of drug picture and determination of dose and repetition schedule.

The sophisticated control system the psycho-neuro-endocrine system and reticulo-endothelial system help to maintain an effective harmony over a wide range of environmental circumstances to balance the functioning of the vital force or spiritual dynamis at all levels and in all areas is thus assured.

Disease evolves from dynamic plane to the functional plane and then to structural plane. Man is a complete psycho-biological unit of life and disease evolves centrifugally from center to periphery or from within outwards.

At the level of spirit when the will is altered, misdirected, weakened and distorted there occurs a loss of value system. Erosion of value system and ethical norms leads to thinking and thinking perceptions and discrimination get blunted as a result this gives rise to indecision which leads to unbalanced, uncontrolled, ungoverned, exotic, spasmodic, irrational, contrary, contradictory, inappropriate and ambivalent attitude and behaviour, functions and activities. When intellect level is affected first of all learning responses are erased. Instinctual response assets themselves at a primitive level subjects become prey to the lower propensities of human nature embedded in the 'emotional desire complex' those evoke pleasurable input to operate so they desire for the greater pleasure. But life offers resistance to this perpetuation through conscience.

Now the conflict arising from blocked desires, impulses, urges, drives, expressions through various channels such as –

- (a) Altered imaginations.
- (b) Altered psychological functions.
- (c) Drop in performance and efficiency.
- (d) Distrubed intellectual performance.
- (e) Emotional disturbance.
- (f) Altered psycho-physiological functions.
- (g) Structural alterations
- (h) Altered behaviour.

From peripheral expressions one has to project backwards to perceive the mental state to treat the patient.

At physical level disease evolves in centripetal manner i.e. from periphery to center, from less vital organ to more vital organ.

Conclusion:

1. From above it is very clear that what was observed by Dr. Hahnemann about two hundred years back that disease is not simply an affection of a part but its existence is due to combination of various factors like emotional sphere, genetic pre-disposition and various morbidic agents. Now these days it is going to be reproved or we can say scientifically proved in the light of advanced and modern technology.
2. It validates that the observations / concepts / theories of Hahnemann's discovery (1796) made before Heinroth (1888) from above study.
3. Mind is controlling man (homosepiens the highest creature of the nature) in health and disease.
4. Disturbances in mind reflects itself in somatic plane.

5. Treating and correcting mind can correct the somatic disturbances.
6. In psychosomatic disorders the therapeutic are enormous because it correlates homoeopathic philosophy.

However homoeopathic physicians prepare a totality of symptoms for patient of psychosomatic categories by incorporating mental / physical / pathological / constitutional / causation / unexpected features / characteristic particulars / common particulars as per the availability of features in the case but to my mind a study should be undertaken to see whether the cure rate can be fostered / augmented by taking mental symptoms alone or mental symptoms along with physical symptoms.

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