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Constipation in Children: A Homoeopathic



Abstract-Constipation is a frequent gastrointestinal complaint in pediatric practice, significantly affecting a child's physical comfort, emotional well-being, and quality of life. Functional constipation constitutes the majority of cases. Homoeopathy offers a holistic and individualized approach by addressing the constitutional, emotional, and miasmatic background of the child. (5)(4)

Introduction(1)(5)

Constipation in children is commonly encountered in pediatric outpatient departments. It is often functional in nature and related to dietary habits, lifestyle changes, emotional factors, and toilet training issues. Chronic constipation can lead to stool withholding behavior, abdominal pain, anal fissures, and psychological distress. Homoeopathy views constipation as a manifestation of a deeper constitutional imbalance rather than a mere local pathology.

Definition(1)-Constipation in children is defined as infrequent bowel movements (less than three per week), passage of hard or dry stools, painful defecation, or a sensation of incomplete evacuation persisting for several weeks.

Etiology(1)-Functional Causes:

- Low fiber diet, • Inadequate fluid intake
- Irregular bowel habits
- Stool withholding behavior
- Emotional stress

Organic Causes (rare):

Hypothyroidism-•Spinal cord abnormalities

- Metabolic disorders,
- Hirschsprung's disease

Clinical Features(1)-Hard and dry stools, painful defecation, abdominal distension, poor appetite, irritability, lethargy, & stool staining of undergarments are common presenting features.

Red Flag signs in Constipation in Children

The presence of the following features suggests an organic or serious underlying pathology and requires urgent evaluation and referral:

Neonatal & Early Infancy--Delayed passage of meconium (>48 hours after birth),

- Failure to thrive or poor weight gain

Gastrointestinal Signs-

- Severe abdominal distension
- Persistent vomiting
- Blood in stools (not due to anal fissure)
- Ribbon-like or pencil-thin stools

Growth & Development-

- Growth retardation or weight loss
- Delayed developmental milestones

Systemic & Endocrine Signs-

- Signs of hypothyroidism (lethargy, cold intolerance, coarse skin)
- Recurrent fever, • Unexplained anemia
- Refractory Constipation
- No response to standard treatment
- Progressive worsening despite adequate management

Clinical Importance-Identification of red flag signs helps differentiate functional constipation from organic causes such as:

- Hirschsprung's disease, • Hypothyroidism
- Spinal cord abnormalities
- Metabolic disorders, • Early recognition prevents complications and ensures timely referral & multi-disciplinary care

Prevention (4)-• Encourage age-appropriate high-fiber diet (fruits, vegetables, whole grains)

- Include natural laxative foods: papaya, pear, apple, figs and fluid intake.

- Promote exclusive breast feeding in infants up to 6 months

- Establish a regular toilet routine, preferably after meals

- Encourage unhurried toilet time

- Provide proper foot support for smaller children to maintain correct posture

- Avoid punishment or negative reinforcement for toilet habits

- Provide reassurance & positive encouragement

- Encourage regular physical activity and play

- Limit excessive screen time

Homoeopathic Management(5)-

The homoeopathic approach emphasizes individualization. Mental generals, physical generals, peculiar symptoms, and miasmatic background are considered for remedy selection. Acute measures may relieve symptoms, but constitutional treatment ensures long-term cure.

Commonly Indicated Remedies (6)(2)(3)

Alumina- No desire to pass stool. Stool is dry, hard, and knotty. Great straining, even for soft stool. Constipation in bottle-fed babies. Rectum inactive. Child is sluggish, slow. Constipation from infancy

Bryonia alba- Dry, hard stools like burnt clay. Worse from motion. Better by rest. Thirsty child. Irritable, wants to be left alone. Cracked lips

Calcarea carbonica- Constipation with large, hard stools. Better when constipated. Fearful, slow-developing child. Sweaty head. Craves eggs. Chilly. Flabby, obese children

Graphites- Large, difficult stools. Constipation with anal fissures. Stool covered with mucus. Weeping skin eruptions. Timid, indecisive child. Cracks in skin

Natrum muriaticum- Dry, crumbly stool. Constipation with headache. Reserved child. Craves salt. Worse from heat

Opium- Complete inactivity of bowels. No urge to pass stool. Hard, black stools. Drowsy child. Painless constipation

Sulphur- Ineffective urge. Child needs to

rush to toilet. Hot, sweaty. Untidy appearance. Loves sweets

Silicea- Stool partially expelled then slips back. Constipation in weak children. Chilly. Delicate, timid child. Sweaty feet

Case-A 6-year-old male child presented with complaints of hard, dry stools occurring once every 5-6 days since one year and pain during defecation and abdominal distension. There was a history of stool withholding due to fear of painful evacuation. Mentally, the child was timid and fearful and preferred the company of his parents. Thermally chilly patient. The child craved eggs. Based on presentation diagnosis of functional constipation was made. Other vital signs were normal.

Calcarea Carbonica 30 was prescribed once daily for 3 days and the follow up advised after 3 days. On 1st follow up-pain reduced during defecation and passed stool on the next day. During 2nd follow up stool passed was not hard and dry and SAC LAC was prescribed

Conclusion- Homoeopathy provides a gentle, safe, and effective approach to managing constipation in children. Individualized constitutional treatment ensures long-term relief without dependency or adverse effects.(5)

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