

A Case of Tear Gas Poisoning

A case of tear gas poisoning solved with homeopathy using the Hahnemann / Boenninghausen's approach

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Chief complaint:

Dyspnoea and diarrhoea after repeated exposures to tear gas.

Case background:

The patient is a first-aidier in the many of the protests in Hong Kong in the previous 2 months since June 2019. According the police reports, near two thousand tear gas canisters were shot during many protests, including residential and commercial districts, as well as closed areas like subway stations injuring many protesters, civilians, press, first aiders, and medical professionals. Her previous experience of the tear gas has been mostly mild and transient with only skin and throat burning sensations, which disappeared in a few hours. However, recently it's shown that expired tear gas were deployed which is reportedly causing extra irritations with longer duration and possibly delayed onset of symptoms. This patient is one of them. She expressed some tear gas smell differently. She had not sought conventional professional medical help because the doctors (especially public ones) are often colluded with the police and would turn patients and injured civilians into suspects and get arrested. She has tried antibiotics as recommended by a nurse friend without any relief of symptoms. Civilians and local medical professionals are concerned that some tear gas may contain cyanide, through decomposition and / or combustion at high temperature.

First consult: 2019.08.xx

Collated details after homeopathic anamnesis:

1. Causation: Multiple exposure to tear gas / pepper spray (her symptomatology is consistent with those reported in the local press and medical professionals)

2. Cough with profuse mucous accumulation, with green / yellowish expectoration out only in the morning, none expelled at other time of the day.
3. Dyspnoea is worse when lying on the back, better lying on the side or with the head high.
4. Diarrhoea with stool pasty, liquid-like, dark brown in colour. No blood spotted so far. Stool is often floating, and she felt that any fatty foods is not tolerated.
5. Appetite is much diminished, almost absent.
6. Sporadic headache in the forehead described as stitching and boring inwards a few times a day. Most typically a few minutes after rising from bed in the morning, or after lying down for a rest in the afternoon.
7. Thirst is intense, especially craves cold drinks (which she means room temperature) at up to 3-4 litres per day. She has a habit of adding some sea salt / Himalayan salt in her water - since before the intoxication.
8. Urine is dark and frothy, but not turbid.
9. Skin burning / red rashes was minimal and transient and not bothering at present.
10. Mouth tastes sour and burning, with a hot breath.
11. Sweat is also sour, and more profuse than usual.
12. Palms are hot to touch, while she usually has chilly hands before.
13. Dreams of protest scenes, being pursued (by unfriendly police), and violence.
14. Generally feeling very 'heaty'. Burning sensations from within outwards.

Chronic health conditions are assumed irrelevant and omitted for privacy here.

Analysis

1. Schematic list of symptoms

Location	Sensation	Modalities ~ worse	Modalities ~ better
Respiration system	Cough; expectoration green / yellowish	<u>Expectoration only in morning</u>	
	Dyspnoea	< <u>lying on the back;</u> < <u>with head low</u>	> lying on the side; > lying with head high
GIT	Diarrhoea; Stool pasty, liquid-like, dark brown in colour; floating	<u>Fatty foods</u>	

	Appetite - absent		
Mouth	Taste sour, hot		
	Thirst - intense		(Desire for cold drinks)
Perspiration	Perspiration - sour , sticky		
	Breathe - hot		
Forehead - inner	Boring / stitching pain - from outwards inwards	soon after rising from bed	
Urine	Dark & frothy		
Dreams	Protest scenes, pursued by unfriendly police.		

2. My impression of the patient: Generally, she is full of heat (breath, inside out, dark colour urine, green expectoration) and sourness (breathe, sweat). Specific symptoms include: cough is worse forlying on back, head low; with expectoration green only in morning. We take these as ‘characteristic symptoms’ (based on the instructions from Aphorism 153 of the Organon of Medicine) and translate these into relevant rubrics in our primary repertory Boenninghausen’s Therapeutic Pocket Book (1846), compilations of symptoms from primary materia medica, this will include:

- Sensations and Complaints, Generalities, Pressing (Aching), from Outwards Inwards {821} [63]
- Urine, Color, Dark {442} [75]
- Aggravation, Situation and Circumstance, Lying, Head Low, with {2513} [19]
- Respiration, Hot {579} [17]
- Fever, Perspiration, Odor, Sour (Acidic) {2111} [28]
- Taste, Sour (Acidic) {340} [84]

Symptom name (Desktop 1)	Sulph.	Hep.	Nux-v.	Bell.	Calc.	Ant-t.	Sep.	Chin.	Nit-ac.	Acon.	Bry
Sensations and Complaints, Generalities, Pressing (Aching), ...	1	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	3	1	1
Urine, Color, Dark {442} [75]	3	3	1	4	3	4	4	2	2	4	4
Aggravation, Situation and Circumstance, Lying, Head Low, ...	2	3	2			3		3			
Respiration, Hot {579} [17]	1				2					3	
Fever, Perspiration, Odor, Sour (Acidic) {2111} [28]	3	3	1	2			4		3	1	2
Taste, Sour (Acidic) {340} [84]	4	2	4	4	4	2	2	4	2		2
Symptom count [6]	6	5	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Value	100	85	64	85	85	78	78	71	71	64	64

3. If were to include every single symptoms, for the sake of illustration and exercise, the translated rubrics will be:

- Cough, Expectoration, Greenish {618} [34]
- Aggravation, Situation and Circumstance, Lying, Back, on {2507} [46]
- Aggravation, Situation and Circumstance, Lying, Head Low, with {2513} [19]
- Aggravation, Food and Drinks, Greasy (Oily, Fatty) {2355} [39]
- Sensations and Complaints, Generalities, Pressing (Aching), from Outwards Inwards {821} [63]
- Taste, Sour (Acidic) {340} [84]
- Urine, Frothy {458} [5]
- Urine, Color, Dark {442} [75]
- Respiration, Hot {579} [17]
- Fever, Perspiration, Odor, Sour (Acidic) {2111} [28]
- Sensations and Complaints, Generalities, Burning, Inner parts in {810} [106]
- Hunger and Thirst, Thirst (Dipsia) {276} [99]

Symptom name (Desktop 2)	Sulph.	Nux-v.	Sep.	Phos.	Sil.	Kali-c.	Puls.	Ars.	Merc.
Cough, Expectoration, Greenish {618} [34]	1	1	3	2	1	1	4	2	1
Aggravation, Situation and Circumstance, Lying, Back, on {2507} [46]	2	4	3	4	3	1	2	3	2
Aggravation, Situation and Circumstance, Lying, Head Low, with {2513} [19]	2	2		1			4	4	
Aggravation, Food and Drinks, Greasy (Oily, Fatty) {2355} [39]	3	2	3	2	1	1	4	3	1
Sensations and Complaints, Generalities, Pressing (Aching), from Outwards I...	1	1	1		1	1			
Taste, Sour (Acidic) {340} [84]	4	4	2	4	1	3	4	2	3
Urine, Frothy {458} [5]									
Urine, Color, Dark {442} [75]	3	1	4	2	1	2	3	1	4
Respiration, Hot {579} [17]	1			2					
Fever, Perspiration, Odor, Sour (Acidic) {2111} [28]	3	1	4		3	1			3
Sensations and Complaints, Generalities, Burning, Inner parts in {810} [106]	4	4	4	4	3	2	2	3	4
Hunger and Thirst, Thirst (Dipsia) {276} [99]	4	3	2	1	3	2	2	4	4
Symptom count [12]	11	10	9	9	9	9	8	8	8
Value	100	82	92	78	60	50	89	78	78

(PW-TPB: 618; 2507; 2513; 2355; 821; 340; 458; 442; 579; 2111; 810; 276)

4. *Sulphur* clearly stands out in the chart, followed by *Hep-s* and *Nux-v*. Urine frothy (*Lach, Laur, Lyc, Seneg, Spong*) is missing in the top candidates in the 'everything' chart. But if I filter to only those 5 remedies in that particular rubric, none of the candidates sound right from our general knowledge of their symptomatology.
5. Then I remember my experience of hiking up a volcano in Bali with a group of homeopaths inhaling the sulphur vapour. The burning, choking, sour experience clearly resembles the patient on the other end of the telephone line. Referring to our primary Materia Media confirms that *Sulphur* is the best remedy.

- Hn-CD: in the morning, while dressing, there is again cough, with expectoration, then no more during the day. Coughing up greenish flakes,
- Hn-MMP: burning up the oesophagus, with sour eructation.
- Hn-MMP: Complete loss of appetite, but constant thirst.
- Aln-EMMP: the feces were nearly black, loose, viscid, greasy, and had a pungent odor of sulphuretted hydrogen
- Hn-MMP: Dark brown urine.
- Hn-CD: Burning in the throat and hot breath in the morning on awaking.- Burning in the chest and intense warmth in the face.
- Hn-CD: Dry heat in the body, every room is too hot for him.- Internal heat with thirst.
- Hn-MMP : heat in the head and hands, with thirst for beer
- Hn-CD: sour taste in the mouth ; aversion to fat food ;
- Hn-CD: Sourish, profuse night-sweat, commencing at once in the evening.-
- Hn-MMP: an occasional painful pressing inwards from the top of the head to deep into the brain, which compels him to wrinkle the forehead and close the eyes.
- Hn-CD: Pressive headache in the forehead, more violent when moving.- Pressure in the head, from one temple to the other, in the morning after rising.

6. *Sulphur 30c* (two tiny #10 granules) dissolved in water and took a sip was advised. (Which was the only available potency available from her friend's home remedy kit.). Once daily for 3 days and report. She reported increased expectoration and diarrhoea in the next morning, and immediately followed by general relief on all levels: sour sweat & breathe, hot breathe, cough, diarrhoea, urine colour. One week update: there remains only minor cough at night, but no more during the day, and all other symptoms are gone. In about ten days, all symptoms are clear.

References:

Clemens von Boenninghausen, "Therapeutic Pocket Book (1846)" (Polony & Weaver Translation, 2011), in OpenRep Synopsis Software (PW-TPB)
 Samuel Hahnemann, "Materia Medica Pura". (Hn-MMP)
 Samuel Hahnemann, "Chronic Diseases". (Hn-CD)
 Samuel Hahnemann, "The Organon of Medicine", 6th Edition.
 Timothy Allen, "Encyclopedia of Materia Medica Pura".