

Arsenic Toxicity from Homeopathic Treatment

Dipankar Chakraborti^{1*}, Subhash Chandra Mukherjee², Khitish Chandra Saha³, Uttam Kumar Chowdhury¹, Mohammad Mahmudur Rahman¹

¹*School of Environmental Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, India*

²*Department of Neurology, Medical College, Kolkata, India*

³*Retired Professor of Dermatology, School of Tropical Medicine, Kolkata, India*

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Homeopathic medicine in Indian subcontinent is commonly believed to be harmless and widely used for its easy availability and low cost. Contrary to the belief, homeopathic treatment may be quite unsafe as exemplified in our three patients developing arsenic toxicity following homeopathic medicine ingestion. **Case Report:** Case No. 1 – A 42 year old diabetic female presented with both melanosis and keratosis as the dermatological manifestations of arsenic toxicity following ingestion of Arsenic Bromide 1-X for seven days and other arsenic containing homeopathic medicines for some time. Case no. 2 – A 44 year old male developed melanotic arsenical skin lesions after taking Arsenic S.F. 1-X for a year to treat his white skin patches. Case no. 3 – A 39 year old male after consuming Arsenic Bromide 1-X for six days to treat his diabetes developed acute gastrointestinal illness followed by leucopenia and thrombocytopenia and then diffuse melanosis of skin with patchy desquamation. About two weeks after acute illness, he developed quadriparesis due to polyneuropathy. **Conclusion:** Arsenic consumption in all 3 cases of arsenic toxicity was measured to be very high. Arsenic content in the homeopathic medicines they used and in their tissue samples (hair, nail, skin scale) were much higher than the normal level. The myth of harmlessness of traditional homeopathic medicine use has been broken in our patients who developed arsenic toxicity from homeopathic treatment.

* Correspondence: Dr. Dipankar Chakraborti, School of Environmental Studies, Jadavpur University, Kolkata-700032, India. Fax: 91/33-414-6266; E-mail: dcoesju@vsnl.com