

AN INDIGENOUS LINE OF TREATMENT FOR MOLLUSCUM CONTAGIOSUM

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Summary

External application of the milky juice of croton plant was found to be effective in 18 (78.2%) out of a total of 23 patients who underwent this clinical trial. No serious untoward effect was observed in any of these cases. This may be considered a simple and inexpensive method of treatment for Molluscum Contagiosum. The effect seems to be due to the mild corrosive action of the juice. Compared to the classical lines of treatment, this is tedious and time consuming as it takes a few days for the lesions to disappear. We feel, however, that this is a useful procedure for infants and children who do not easily submit to other methods of treatment.

Introduction

It has been accidentally discovered that the copious milky juice of Croton plant is useful for the treatment of Molluscum Contagiosum. Two children aged 5 and 7 years suffering from Molluscum Contagiosum, while playing in the garden, applied the milky juice of croton plant on their molluscum lesions for fun. Surprisingly, the lesions gradually disappeared after a few days. This observation prompted us to study the action of Croton plant juice on Molluscum Contagiosum.

Croton plant belongs to the order Gerinales and the family Euphorbeaceae, the tribe crotoneae with five sub tribes.

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The genera of the plant is Euphorbia with twentyseven species. This group of plants contains copious milky juice with latex. Some varieties of these plants have medicinal value especially Croton tiglium which has a very powerful purgative action. The bark, leaves and fruit, of Croton oblongifolius are also used in medicine. For the present study croton tiglium and croton oblongifolium were used¹.

Molluscum Contagiosum is an infectious disease caused by a filterable virus. The disease presents as single or multiple smooth surfaced pearly grey, round, waxy papules from pin head to bean size, with central depression from which a caseous plug may be squeezed out. The caseous or curd like substance is composed of degenerated epithelial cells and keratin. If left alone, the lesions generally grow slowly from a pinhead size to the size of a pea. They are, at first, firm, solid and flesh coloured, but upon reaching maturity become softened in the centre^{2,3}.

Molluscum contagiosum may disappear spontaneously and also tends to

involute after trauma. This viral disease may be treated satisfactorily by any of the following methods.

1. Manual expression and painting with tincture iodine.
2. Application of carbolic acid.
3. Curettage under ethyl chloride anaesthesia.
4. Electrodesiccation.

Material & Methods

The material for this study consists of twentythree patients of Molluscum Contagiosum selected at random from the Dermatology and Venereology out-patient clinic of Medical College Hospital, Alleppey. Age of these patients varied from one to twenty years. Out of 23, eleven (47.8%) patients were males and twelve (52.2%) were females. (Table)

TABLE
Showing age distribution of 23 patients with molluscum contagiosum

Age group in years	Number of Patients	Percentage
1 to 5	8	34.8
6 to 10	4	17.4
11 to 20	11	47.8

Method of Application

The copious milky juice from the fresh plant was applied directly to the lesion by the stalk of the leaf itself and allowed to dry. Patients were advised to retain the material on the lesion for a minimum period of twelve hours without washing. The procedure was

repeated every day for 3 weeks. Patients were asked to report once in five days for follow up.

Results

Before each fresh application, cases were carefully assessed for clinical changes. On the average, the papules started shrinking about the 5th day with a tendency to form a small scale at the centre. Out of these 23 patients 18 (78.2%) had excellent response with complete disappearance of the molluscum lesions. Two patients had no response at all and the remaining three patients showed only an initial reduction in the size of the papules which remained stationary afterwards. Four children complained of itching sensation, but there was no evidence of inflammation or excoriation. Itching subsided spontaneously on reassurance. Three patients developed mild secondary infection which could be controlled with sulphonamides.

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STUDY OF HISTO-FUNCTIONAL COMPLEX OF LIVER IN LEPROSY

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Summary

Seventy six cases of different types of leprosy, with varying duration of illness, were studied for their changes in liver function and hepatic lesions. Specific granulomatous lesion suggestive of lepromatous hepatitis were mainly seen in lepromatous leprosy (17 cases out of 28 cases of leprosy). Granulomata in liver were present in all types of leprosy. Some of them had progressed to stellate fibrosis (7 cases) and early cirrhotic changes (6 cases). Non-specific changes were seen in 22 cases, of which 6 (3 lepromatous) showed stellate fibrosis with attempt to incomplete lobule formation. Amyloid deposits were not seen in any of these cases.

Functional derangement has been noted mainly in lepromatous patients irrespective of the extent and duration of the disease. There was a uniform elevation of total serum proteins (6.4-9.2 gms%) mainly due to increase in serum globulin (2.2-4.0 gms%). Serum albumin was lower than normal (2.6-5.2 gms%). Thymol turbidity showed abnormal results (3-9 units) and serum cholesterol (102-206 mg%) levels were low. Other biochemical estimations were normal.

Leprosy is a chronic progressive granulomatous infection of man which in its various forms attacks mainly the superficial tissues like skin, peripheral nerves and nasal mucosa. The involvement of viscera in leprosy is well recognised and amongst the viscera, liver is

the most commonly affected organ¹. The hepatic involvement is seen in the early stage of the disease^{2,3}. The most frequent lesion is the granuloma which is characteristic of the disease. Few recent reports have also described lesions mimicking cirrhosis of liver in these cases³⁻⁵. The studies of the functional status of liver in leprosy have revealed minimum dysfunction in tuberculoid leprosy, but marked in one test or other in lepromatous leprosy^{3,10}. The present study was undertaken to assess the histo-functional complex of liver in various clinical forms of leprosy in Bundelkhand Division of Uttar Pradesh.

Material and Methods

Seventy six cases of various clinical forms of leprosy admitted to M. L. B.

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