

Research Article

## Stomach Cancer and Its Homoeopathic Management

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**Abstract** Like other cancer, Stomach cancer is also a life-threatening disease. It is the result of uncontrolled cell growth in the inner lining of the stomach. The condition is often unrecognizable in the early stages as its symptoms are similar to other diseases like gastritis and ulcer. This article stresses on the different points of stomach cancer & its risk factor, symptomatology, investigation in a concise manner & also emphasizes how Homoeopathy manages in such cases by its holistic approach of treatment.

**Keywords** *Stomach cancer; Ulcer; Homoeopathy; Helicobacter pylori; Similimum*

### Introduction

Stomach cancer is the fifth leading type of cancer and the third leading cause of death from cancer globally, making up about 7% of cases and 9% of deaths. In 2018, it nearly occurred in 1.03 million people and caused 783,000 deaths globally.

The result of disease occurring in tissues, in cancerous changes is of such character that they cannot constitute the curative signs. But those things which are curable and capable of change and which will be materially affected by administration of the remedies, the physician must know that they are the curative indications. And on the basis of those indications similimum can be selected which ultimately cure or manage the disease of the patient, as per the pathological changes occurred in stomach cancer [1].

### Aetiology [1]

- **Sex** - Male Female ratio - 2:1. Estrogen may protect the women against the development of this form of cancer.
- **Age** - >60 years. It is uncommon under 40 years.
- **Race** - Blacks are more affected than the White.
- **Geographic distribution** - Some regions of the globe, e.g., Chile, Central America, Colombia and Japan have very high incidence of this disease.

- **Economic status** - common in lower socio- economic group having a positive family history
- It is more common in blood group A subjects.

### Risk Factors [1]

**Infections** - *Helicobacter pylori* infection is an essential risk factor in 65–80% of gastric cancers, but only 2% of people with *Helicobacter* infections develop stomach cancer.

**Smoking** - It increases the risk of developing gastric cancer significantly, from 40% increased risk for current smokers to 82% increase for heavy smokers.

**Dietary factors** – diet with salt, salt-rich foods meat, processed meat, spicy vegetable, pickled vegetables, and smoked food. Nitrates and nitrites in meats can be converted by certain bacteria, including *H. pylori*, into compounds that have been found to cause stomach cancer often.

**Obesity** - Obesity is a physical risk factor that has been found to increase the risk of gastric adenocarcinoma by contributing to the development of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

**Genetic** - About 10% of cases run in families, and between 1% and 3% of cases are due to genetic syndromes inherited from a person's parents such as hereditary diffuse gastric cancer.

### Clinical Features [1] [2]

In early stages of gastric cancer, the following symptoms may occur:

- Indigestion and stomach discomfort.
- Bloating feeling after eating.
- Mild nausea.
- Loss of appetite.
- Heartburn.

In advanced stages of gastric cancer, the following signs and symptoms may occur:

- Blood in the stool.
- Vomiting.
- Weight loss - present in 50% of the cases.
- Stomach pain.
- Jaundice (yellowing of eyes and skin).
- Ascites (build-up of fluid in the abdomen).
- Trouble swallowing.

### Signs [1] [2]

- Emaciation, anemia and jaundice may be present.
- **Virchow's nodes** - often present.
- **Troisier's sign** - hard, fixed, enlarged lymph nodes on the left side of the root of the neck in between the two heads of sternomastoid muscle
- Sometimes evidence of metastasis in the left axillary may be seen.
- Dependent oedema may be present.
- Recurrent thrombophlebitis (Trousseau's syndrome), Dermatomyositis, Acanthosis nigricans, may develop simulating paraneoplastic syndrome.

**Examination of Abdomen [1]**

- A hard lump may be felt in the abdomen in about 30% of cases.
- Liver may be enlarged, hard and irregular due to metastasis.
- Ascites may be present.
- Visible gastric peristalsis may be seen.
- **Sister Mary Joseph's nodule** - Small nodules may be felt around umbilicus due to metastasis
- **Blumer's shelf** - Rectal examination reveal a mass in perirectal pouch due to enlarged lymph nodes
- **Krukenberg's tumour** - In vaginal examination it may be felt due to metastasis in the ovary.

**Special Investigations [2]**

1. **Barium meal X-ray** - filling defect or ulcer usually near the pyloric region or in the greater curvature whose diameter is more than 2.5 cm.
2. **Abdominal CT scan** - for identifying metastasis or direct involvement of adjacent structures.
3. **Gastric secretory test** - Non-histamine fast achlorhydria or polychlorhydria. Gastric pH more than 6.0 is very suggestive of malignancy. The colour of gastric juice is coffee ground. Blood test is positive in all samples.
4. **Exfoliative cytology** - malignant cells in the gastric washings.
5. **Lymph node biopsy** - the nature of the mother tumour.
6. **Gastroscopy** - shows the tumour directly and has been accepted as a standard method for diagnosis.
7. **Blood examination** - high ESR and Fe-deficiency anemia.

**Homoeopathic Approach**

Homoeopathy is the science who deals with patient symptomatology. We stress on the individualistic approach of treatment to cure the patient. But, in cancer cases sometimes we have to go to a palliative mode of treatment for the betterment of patients. At that time we select the medicine on the basis of LAW OF PALLIATION & here also we trace on the present situation of the patient & select the medicine.

According to Dr. Kent, to think of remedies for cancer is confusion, but to think of the remedies for the patient who appears to have cancer is orderly. Wonderful changes will take place in the conditions when the remedies that correspond to the conditions. Cancer is the result of disorder, which must be turned in order and must be healed [3].

“When any person hears that he is suffering from CANCER, it develops fear in his mind. He thinks lots of imagination & feels he is going to die. The person is now affected both physically as well as mental disturbances.”

In Homoeopathy, we put a lot of stress on mental general & physical general symptoms. Every disease affects the mental sphere of the patient & if the patient is mentally fit, his suffering is gradually diminished. So, whenever we treat such types of cases we also emphasize on the mental sphere of the patient which helps to choose the similimum.

**Homoeopathic Treatment**

Here I discuss some of the well-known Homoeopathic medicines which have been used for the treatment of stomach cancer & it is discussed in different Materia-Medica [4] [5].

1. **Aceticum acidum** - Cancer of stomach. Intense burning thirst. Cold drinks distress. Vomits after every kind of food. Epigastric tenderness. Burning pain as of an ulcer. Sour belching and vomiting. Burning water brash and profuse salivation. Violent burning pain in stomach and chest and followed by coldness of skin and cold sweat on forehead. Stomach feels as if he had taken a lot of vinegar. Fermentation in the stomach.
2. **Conium maculatum** - One of the greatest palliatives in ulceration of the stomach; cancer of the stomach. Hardness of the abdomen with great sensitivity. Pinching, stitching pains, colicky, cutting pains, cramping pains. Bearing down sensation in the abdomen-in the woman as if the uterus would escape.
3. **Crotalus horridus** - Cancer of stomach with vomiting of bloody, slimy mucus. Intolerance of clothing around the stomach. Unable to retain anything leads to violent vomiting of food; bilious vomiting, vomiting of blood. Constant nausea and vomiting every month, after menstruation. Cannot lie on right side, without vomiting dark-green vomitus. Black or coffee-grounds vomiting. Trembling, fluttering feeling below the epigastrium. Intolerance of clothing about epigastrium. Faintness and sinking in the stomach. Ulceration of the stomach. Hungry, craves stimulants, sugar; averse to meat.
4. **Cundurango** - Allays the pain in gastralgia accompanying stomach cancer of stomach. Modifies secretions of digestive glands. Painful affections of the stomach; ulceration. Vomiting of food and indurations, constant burning pain. Stricture of oesophagus, with burning pain behind sternum, where the food seems to stick.
5. **Graphites** - Cancer of pylorus. Aversion to meat. Sweets nauseate. Hot drinks disagree. Nausea and vomiting after each meal. Morning sickness during menstruation. Pressure in stomach. Burning in the stomach, causing hunger. Eructation is difficult. Constrictive pain in stomach. Flatulence. Stomach pain is temporarily relieved by eating or hot drinks especially milk and lying down.
6. **Lobelia erinus** - Extremely rapid development of malignant growths; colloid cancer of the omentum; cork-screw-like pains in abdomen, distaste for brandy.
7. **Ornithogalum umbellatum** - Chronic gastric and other abdominal indurations, possibly cancer of intestinal tract, especially of stomach and caecum. Center of action is pylorus, causing painful contraction with duodenal distension. Tongue coated. Agonizing feeling in chest and stomach. It starts from the pylorus with flatus that rolls in balls from one side to the other. Gastric ulceration even with haemorrhage. Pain increases when food passes the pyloric outlet. Vomiting of coffee-ground-looking matter. Distention of stomach. Frequent belching of offensive flatus. Painful sinking across epigastrium.
8. **Phosphorus** - Very useful remedy in cancer of the stomach, with coffee-ground vomiting and burning; coldness, as if freezing, in the pit of the stomach; paroxysms of knife-like pains in the stomach. The pains in the stomach are ameliorated by ice- cold things; spasmodic contractions of the stomach; hemorrhage from the stomach; vomiting of great quantities of clotted blood; long-standing dyspepsia; much flatulence with regurgitation of food; distended stomach and abdomen; ulceration of the stomach. Every time the food is eructated by

mouthful until the stomach is emptied of the last meal with constant nausea except when something cold is in the stomach. As soon as water becomes warm in the stomach it comes up.

## Management

**Not only Homoeopathic Medicine, but proper diet is also necessary in such cases for smooth effect of the medicine & helps the patient to reduce different complications which comes in most of the cancer cases.**

- Diet must including fresh vegetables, fruits, mushrooms, garlic, soybeans, and green onions
- Spicy or junk foods, caffeinated beverages should be avoided
- Stop alcohol consumption and smoking

## Repertorial Analysis

Here I discuss two well-known repertories & their rubric with medicine in stomach cancer.

### § KENT REPERTORY[6]

**STOMACH - CANCER:** *Acet-ac., Ars., ars-i.; bar-c., bell., Bism., cadm., caps., Carb-ac., Carb-an., carb-v., Con., crot-h., Cund., hydr., iris, kreos., lach., Lyc., merc-c., mez., nux-v., Phos., plat., sep., sil., staph., sulph.*

### § BOERICKE REPERTORY[4]

**STOMACH - CANCER:** *Acet-ac., Am-m., Arg-n., Ars., Bar-c., Bell., Bism., Cadm-s., Calc- f., Carb-v., Con., Cund., Graph., Hydr., Kali-bi., Kali-c., Kreos., Mag- p., Nux-v., Orni., Phos., Plb., Sec.*

## Conclusion

Homoeopathy plays a vital role in stomach cancer. In homoeopathy, to cure the patient would be to cure the cancer, and in order to cure the patient it is necessary to go back in history and get those symptoms that represent the patient in a state of disease and not the tissues in a state of disease results and by administering similimum it can be cured or managed as per the pathological changes occurred. Therefore Homoeopathy is a good choice of treatment in stomach cancer.

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