

HUNTER (J.W.)

On asthma xxx





COMPLIMENTS OF THE AUTHOR.

ON ASTHMA,

Its Causation and Treatment; with Reports of Cases.

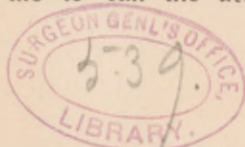
Alkalithia, as a Positive Cure.

BY J. W. HUNTER, M. D., WACO, TEXAS.

A paper read before The Texas State Medical Association, April 23, 1895.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN:

THE pathology is unknown in most cases, although some light has been thrown upon it recently by Alexander Haig, M. A., M. D., F. R. C. P., London, in a work entitled, "Uric Acid as a Factor in the Causation of Disease," and I shall quote freely from this author in the course of my paper. The symptomatology and diagnosis of asthma are so well known by every intelligent physician that they will not be recited in this paper, hence we will come at once to the *causation* of this most perplexing disease. As a text to the causation and treatment of asthma, I will state, that six months ago, while in San Antonio, I met Dr. F. M. Hicks, of that city, who said to me that spasmodic asthma, in his judgment, in the majority of cases was due to uric acid in the blood. He had cured two cases with Alkalithia, and that he believed the *modus operandi* of this cure by Alkalithia was by a neutralization of the hyperacid condition of the blood, with this powerful alkali, each heaping teaspoonful of which contains caffeine, 1 grain; carbonate of lithia, 5 grains; bicarbonates of potash and soda each 10 grains. Dr. Hicks asked me to call the attention



of the profession to this uric acid theory as a causation of asthma, that we might investigate it and see what there was in it, in consequence of which investigation, as you will see further on in this paper when we come to the reports of cases, we have struck the key-note in regard to the causation of this agonizing disease.

Dr. Haig, referred to above, in an article in Wood's Medical and Surgical Monographs, N. Y., Feb. 1890, page 359, on "uric acid as a cause of disease," after quoting headache, dyspepsia, mental depression, epilepsy, gout, acute rheumatism, etc., said with regard to asthma: "Here again we have a possibly functional disorder, which, like so many I have mentioned has long borne a somewhat indefinite relation to gout, and it has occurred to me, since my investigation on uric acid has brought to my notice its action on the arterioles, that directly or indirectly it may affect the circulation in the bronchi and lungs, and so produce asthma. There are also not a few points in the history and symptoms of asthma and the onset of the attacks, which may be taken as pointing to its possible origin in a uric acid storm." He says in the late edition of his work (1894): "I have mentioned elsewhere several things which seem to make it probable that uric acid affects both the pulmonary and the systemic circulation in the same way."

My interest in the matter was also greatly enhanced by seeing in the *Lancet*, a notice of a paper by Dr. Yavelin, of St. Petersburg, in which it appeared that large doses of citrate and carbonate of soda diminished the excretion of water from the skin and lungs, for I already knew that similar doses of these alkaline salts would, by increasing uric acid in the blood, contract the vessels in the kidneys and diminish, so long as the excess of uric acid might last, the excretion of water in the urine. It seemed probable, then, from these considerations, that uric acid not only affected, as I already knew well, the vessels of the kidneys and skin, but Dr. Yavelin's results made it probable that it affected also the vessels of the lungs, and diminished the output of water therefrom, and as soon as I was able to, I began some researches with a view of confirming Dr. Yavelin's results, which will be found on page 176 of his late work.

Now then, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, I understand from the above results of Dr. Yavelin and Dr. Haig, and also from the

results of Dr. Haig, spoken of in his work, further on, that the alkalis being uric acid solvents, caused an increase of the uric acid in the blood for the time being, which caused a small excretion of water, by contracting the arterioles of the lungs and kidneys, and hence the asthma was produced by the contraction of the vessels of the lungs and bronchi by the uricacidæmia. Dr. Haig also says, from his experiments, that with the scanty urine, we have a large excretion of uric acid, so that when the blood is cleared of the uric acid, we have the dilatation of the vessels and hence the diuretic effect of the alkalis, so to speak, and the arterial tension being relieved in the lungs and bronchi the wheezing stops.

Asthma is usually spoken of as a paroxysmal affection, attacks coming on suddenly, about 2 A. M. to 4 A. M., when the sufferer has gone to bed quite well. Dr. Haig says asthma has been called by Dr. Goodhart and others a paroxysmal neurosis, and they would, I suppose, class migraine and epilepsy in the same category. I have shown however that many cases of migraine and epilepsy are entirely due to the changes which uric acid produces in the circulation, and that if the blood is kept clear of this poison, the attacks will practically cease to recur, and my researches leave little or no doubt in my mind that asthma represents one of the effects of uric acid on the circulation in the thorax.

Now then, Mr. Chairman, we shall see further on, when we come to reports of cases, that *clearing the blood of uric acid, and keeping it clear, is the only point necessary in the treatment of asthma.*

Now we come to the relationship of asthma attack to the excretion of uric acid. Dr. Haig says the first thing that directed his attention to this matter was the similar effects of diet, both in migraine and asthma, he himself having been a sufferer from migraine, and that when he was on ordinary meat diet he usually had 30 or 40 attacks in a year, but when he was on extra meat diet, for the purpose of training, at Oxford, his attacks were more frequent and severe, while now, when he takes no meat at all, his headaches are practically absent altogether. He also said that his fellow student, Dr. W. E. Stevenson, suffered in the same way with his asthma, while training at Cambridge. He said Dr. Stevenson also suffered at times with headaches and with acute

rheumatism, showing the relation between these diseases and asthma, and his pulse was often slow and of high tension. He says, I have had slight attacks of asthma myself, and before I recognized this relationship, they caused me considerable uneasiness by suggesting more serious disease; thus I noticed that occasionally in the early morning before breakfast, I had a feeling of heaviness behind the sternum, with a little wheezing, followed by expectoration of a little mucus; I also noticed that the pain disappeared soon after breakfast, though both the pain and wheezing occasionally returned about 5 or 6 P. M. to disappear after dinner. Some time after this in the course of an experiment I purposely increased the excretion of uric acid and the amount passing through the blood, when I found that my chest troubles were decidedly worse during this experiment, but when I reversed the process and cleared the blood of uric acid, my chest troubles suddenly and completely disappeared, and remained so for some time, until one or two meat and wine dinners with friends increased the uric acid and brought back a morning wheeze. This opened my eyes to the nature of my trouble and I was at once able to explain its periodicity, for, as I have pointed out, the largest excretion of uric acid occurs in the early morning hours before breakfast, and the next largest in what I call the afternoon alkaline tide from 3 to 6 P. M.

I was told by Mr. McKeever, of McGregor, Texas, the other day, who had been a great sufferer from asthma, that his urine was always scant during an attack of asthma, but as soon as the attack was over he had a diuresis, showing that the uric acid in the blood had contracted the arterioles in the kidneys as well as in the lungs, hence the small excretion of water and large excretion of uric acid during the attack, to be followed by a diuresis as soon as the uric acid had been cleared from the blood. This same gentleman told me that he had not had any asthma for several months, but he was suffering with rheumatism. And I may mention incidentally, while on this point, that Dr. McHenry, of San Angelo, Texas, told me that he had a patient, a lady who suffered very much with asthma while in San Angelo, but that he had sent her to Colorado to see if a change of climate would not relieve her asthma. It did so, but she was suffering terribly with rheumatism, showing that the uric acid had been cleared from

the blood by the climate, but was deposited in the joints, and hence the rheumatism.

Dr. Haig says, if asthma has a causation such as I am suggesting, it will be made worse by anything that contracts the systemic arterioles and raises arterial tension, and it will be made better by anything that relaxes the arterioles and reduces arterial tension; it will also be made worse by anything that obstructs the free entry of air into the thorax. The most common cause of high arterial tension is uric acid in the blood, and this suffices to explain at once the relationship of asthma to gout and various other diseases. To sum up then, Dr. Haig says asthma is due to uric acid in the blood and the high arterial tension it produces. When from any extraneous cause, as a chill, a blow, a local irritation, or a rise of temperature, uric acid is precipitated (crystallized) in a joint, the blood is cleared of the excess it previously contained, and the high tension and the asthma subside. An interesting case of this kind is mentioned in the *British Medical Journal*, vol. 11, 1888, p. 954, where it is told of Frederick the Great that he had a severe attack of dyspnoea, followed next day by gout, while it was further said that he was very gouty and had an irascible temper, this last representing the effects of uric acid on the intro-cranial circulation, just as the dyspnoea represented its effects on the thoracic.

“The relationship of asthma to nasal irritation and obstruction may be simply that these tend to diminish the free inrush of air in inspiration, and thus tend to diminish for a time the atmospheric pressure in the chest, and so increase the congestion in the bronchial area; other things, as arterial tension, remaining the same. Hay asthma, oat asthma, etc., may in this way be due to the irritant action of certain small particles producing nasal congestion and obstruction, with the concomitant action in the case of hay asthma of heat, which increases the alkalinity of the blood, and the amount of uric acid it will contain. Bad air and deficient oxygen may act by increasing the alkalinity of the blood, as I have pointed out that deficient oxidation probably produces a uricacidæmia in this way, hence the headache of badly ventilated theatres, or hot crowded rooms.” (Haig).

One of the best evidences that uric acid is the cause of asthma in the majority of cases, in my judgment, is that iodide of

potassium has given us the best results, as a curative treatment, of any other drug until recently. Dr. Haig says it is interesting to find that iodide of potassium and the iodides relax the arterioles and cause lower arterial tension, which they are well known to do, by clearing the blood of uric acid, and I have been able to show (Chapter III of his work) that the fall of arterial tension and the diuresis they produce is exactly contemporaneous with a very marked fall in the excretion of uric acid, and as every drug which produces a similar fall in the excretion of uric acid produces also a similar fall of arterial tension and a diuresis, I have felt no hesitation in attributing these effects of the iodides to their action in increasing the solubility of uric acid in the blood. The iodides then probably relieve asthma by clearing the blood of uric acid and so reducing arterial tension. These facts leave in my mind no practical doubt whatever but that asthma is generally the result of the action of contracted arterioles, and the high arterial tension on the thoracic circulation.

Dr. Haig, in his chapter on gout, says that he attributes the good results of the salicylates, alkalies and colchicum to their alkalinity.

Hence the good results with Alkalithia (as the following cases will demonstrate), which is a happy combination of our most reliable alkalies, to wit: lithia, potash and soda, with the addition of that most excellent heart tonic, diuretic and relaxant of the arterioles, caffeine, which helps to eliminate the uric acid by the kidneys and other excretory organs, while the alkalies hold it in solution in the blood.

Now, in this connection, just a word as to prophylactic treatment of asthma, and with the condensed reports of ten cases treated by some of the best physicians in Texas, I will close. Dr. Haig has shown very clearly in his work on "uric acid as a cause of disease," that a meat diet and the wines and malt liquors will increase uric acid in the system, hence the importance of placing the patient on a milk and vegetable diet, after clearing the blood of uric acid with this powerful alkaline combination called "Alkalithia." It matters not whether the patient is an asthmatic, rheumatic, epileptic or has gout or any other disease caused by uric acid. The Alkalithia should be given in teaspoonful doses three or four times a day, and kept up as long as the urine shows uric acid by the microscopic or any other test.

Case I.

"I tried Alkalithia on one case with benefit, I think, for she has been free from her attacks since using it a few months ago."

ST. CLOUD COOPER, M. D.,
Jefferson, Texas.

Case II.

"Mrs. C. had been suffering with asthma for weeks and I prescribed the usual remedies without any relief whatever. When you called my attention to uric acid as a probable cause and recommended Alkalithia, I prescribed it for Mrs. C. and, to my surprise, a few doses not only relieved, but cured her."

R. T. SCOTT, M. D.,
Houston, Texas.

Case III.

"Mrs. C. has suffered five or six years with asthma. I have been called every 4 or 6 weeks to treat her. January 18th I was last called and prescribed Alkalithia and she has had no return of asthma since, being the longest time she has been free for several years."

CHAS. T. YOUNG, M. D.,
Waco, Texas.

Case IV.

"Mrs. J., a great sufferer for years with asthma, has been using Alkalithia two weeks only and has been greatly improved in this short time. She tells me that since beginning with the Alkalithia she has not had a single 'choking spell,' and that she has not been free from them so long in some years."

S. D. NAYLOR, M. D.,
Stephenville, Texas.

Case V.

"I treated a middle-aged lady twelve years ago for a bad attack of asthma of long standing, and she had no return until two years ago, and then only slightly. I gave her sod. salicyl and tr. lobelia.

"My last case was a man of 25 years. Put him on Salicylate Soda, Antipyrine and Tincture of Belladonna and he has had no attack for three or four months now. This case did not have Alkalithia, but was treated on an alkali basis and it proved successful. My object is to show that the case was due to uric acid and an alkali relieved the patient."

S. A. NUNN, M. D.,
Belton, Texas.

Case VI.

"I was suffering with asthma and emphysema of left lung when I saw you at Dallas. I have been a slave to this disease for 50 years and never suffered more than in this attack. I used two bottles of Alkalithia and it gave me more relief than any medicine I ever used."

D. W. MOMAND, M. D.,
Dallas, Texas.

Case VII.

"The trial I have made with Alkalithia as a remedy in asthma has not been very satisfactory. No benefit has resulted from its use in my patient."

W. R. BLAIBLOCK, M. D.,
McGregor, Texas.

Case VIII.

"I put my patient on Alkalithia 25 days since and have given two full bottles, besides several sample bottles, following the directions closely. Up to date have received no beneficial results. However, it is the worst case of asthma I ever treated, and has had one continuous attack since December 15th last."

P. M. KUYKENDALL, M. D.,
Moody, Texas.

I report these cases in order to have both sides fairly represented and to call attention to the fact that some cases are due to other causes and will not be benefited by Alkalithia. In the latter correspondence I do not doubt that some surgical treatment is necessary in the nose, as very likely a polyp or hypertrophied bone or spur or other nasal irritation keeps up the disease.

Cases IX and X.

Office, Waco, Texas, 27 Provident Building.

My Dear Dr. Hunter:—In answer to your polite request, and responsive to the great interest you have manifested in the action of Alkalithia, I take pleasure in adding my testimony to the salutary action in two cases. The one of asthma complicated with rheumatism, of long standing. The patient, Mr. Warren, has reported great relief from the Alkalithia, more so than from any other remedy tried, and believes it to be a permanent cure.

The second case is one of asthmatic trouble for many years, now feeling better on Alkalithia, and having more hope of permanent cure than from anything tried heretofore. The time is too short to speak more fully, or positively, but I have faith in the theory you suggest, and am hopeful of the demonstration which further trial of Alkalithia will give.

With great respect I am, Yours,
H. W. BROWN, M. D.

NOTE :—Physicians interested in the subject of asthma and its cure by Alkalithia, will please report their cases to me at Dallas, Texas, that I may tabulate them and greatly oblige,
Yours Respectfully,

J. W. HUNTER, M. D.
Dallas, Texas.

