

Case Report of an Abscess in a Bitch Healed with Alternative Medicine

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Homœopathic Links 2019;32(2):118–122.

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Abstract

Keywords

- abscess
- homeopathy
- acupuncture
- Chinese traditional medicine
- veterinary medicine

The most widespread treatment for infected wounds, that enjoys the trust of the medical community, is antibiotherapy. After this, surgery can be considered, if there are recurrences or serious risks for the patient's health. The following reported case aims to demonstrate the effectiveness of natural therapies in the resolution of infections that occur with suppuration. A half-blood old bitch developed an encapsulated abscess on the back of her neck. An exhaustive clinical examination was done to diagnose an immune deficiency. This can explain the failure of antibiotics prescribed by another practitioner. The combination of acupuncture, homeopathy, and phytotherapy solved the problem satisfactorily in one month. This integrative approach is based on the complementation between Chinese traditional medicine and homeopathic medicine.

Introduction

Veterinary medicine has been developed in parallel to human medicine, with an official approach based on scientific evidence from double-blind studies.¹ Consequently, a medical system like the human has been created, where antibiotherapy and surgery dominate the casuistry. However, traditional Chinese medicine and homeopathic medicine have been successfully applied to animals from the moment they were discovered.^{2,3} Nowadays, veterinarians study these certified disciplines and use them with good results. Infected wounds are also one of the situations where this kind of therapies works well.⁴

Acupuncture points helps regulating vital functions and stimulating essential processes, like immunity answers.⁵ The Earth points of the main meridians improve the digestion and aid to make red and white blood cells.⁵ In this sense, spleen point 6 (SP06) acts in a similar way but enhancing three energetic channels at the same time to defend the body against pathogenic factors. Those meridians are spleen, liver, and kidney, which connect with the same named organs.⁵

There are a lot of homeopathic remedies to treat abscess and all kind of suppurative wounds.⁶ The most important thing is making a differential diagnosis based in the similarity between the pathogenetic characteristics of the medicine in its natural toxic state and the symptoms of the patient.⁷ The following table can be considered a good example to explain some easy differences among the principal remedies for infected wounds (► **Table 1**).

Patient Information

A half-blood old bitch developed an abscess on the back of her neck. It began as a small alopecia with pearly skin. The existence of an abnormality in that place was known before as hardness. After a surgery of breast cancer, the lesion got worse progressively and accumulated purulent exudate. The injury was treated with antibiotics in another veterinary clinic after being drained. When the abscess contained pus again, surgery was proposed as the most appropriate solution. The animal had also backgrounds of hepatic disease.

A very relevant fact is the diet, which consist of low-quality dry feed and unhealthy homemade foods. This diet

Table 1 Some specific symptoms related with homeopathic medicine for suppuration

<i>Calendula officinalis</i>	Exhaustion due to blood loss and excessive pain related with the wounds.
Hepar sulfur	Secretions and excretions have the smell of stale cheese. Sour smell of the body.
Silicea	Constitutions that suffer from poor nutrition, not because they lack food in quantity and quality, but by an imperfect assimilation.

favours imbalances in the immune system, since the body's defences are conditioned by the assimilated nutrients.⁸

Clinical Findings

Physically, the animal had a poor body condition. The muscles were not very toned, especially affecting the back and the hind limbs. Heart and lungs did not make abnormal noise at auscultation. The abdomen was bulky, evidencing a relaxation of the musculature. No abdominal pain at palpation. Temperature was 38°C, but the thermometer came out with rest of soft faeces. This indicated a poor digestion. Skin and hair had lost brightness. The behaviour was good.

The abscess was located on the right side of the back of the neck (→Fig. 1). The base had a hard consistency due to the dermis inflammation. The skin was necrotic and had lost hair, presenting a dark colour and a rough texture.

Drainage by sterile needle puncture allowed to obtain a purulent chocolate-coloured exudate from the mixture of pus and blood. The total volume obtained was 12 mL (→Fig. 2).

Diagnosis

Cutaneous abscess is an injury usually caused by pyogenic bacteria that invade the dermis through skin wounds.⁸ In this case, there was no clear solution of continuity in the epidermis, but a previous alopecia with pearly skin indicated an immunologic imbalance and a compromise in its integrity. The immune deficiency was also based in an unhealthy diet (low quality dry food, remains of bad human food) and backgrounds of hepatic disease and operated breast cancer.



Fig. 1 Encapsulated abscess on the back of the neck.



Fig. 2 Purulent exudate removed from the abscess by sterile puncture.

From traditional Chinese medicine point of view, the main treatment with acupuncture is needling an immunostimulant point. This point is SP06 because it acts on spleen, liver, and kidney meridians at the same time, being the three energetic channels with a direct influence on the defence cells by their action on the blood.⁹

Regarding homeopathy, silicea is the best choice because it demonstrates its efficacy in suppurative health problems. Another important reason is the indication of this medicine in patients with a poor body condition derived of a bad assimilation of nutrients. In this case, this bad digestion is the consequence of eating low quality food. About the pathogenetic characteristics of the remedy, silicea is a homeopathic mineral medicine obtained from silica. Its main indication is abscesses and suppurations in any part of the body.¹⁰ Its action is centrifugal, favouring suppuration to eliminate all the purulent content of the infection centre. Then it facilitates the correct healing of the skin. When promoting drainage, caution should be exercised if the suppurative process is in an internal cavity. Its indication in dwarfism makes to think if the remedy acts through the growth hormone or a similar factor for healing and cicatrising.

Another decision was to complement homeopathy with Homotoxicology. It is a branch of homeopathic medicine that combines several remedies with synergistic action to drain from the body the toxic substances responsible for the patient's disease.¹¹ It is also known as bioregulatory medicine,¹¹ as it balances the organism by stripping what harms it. The ampoule used stimulates the body's defence mechanisms against infections with pus among other health problems.

A final consideration of diagnosis affects the treatment. The therapy can be focused by applying the main remedy inside and outside. This one medicine is silicea, but an ointment presentation was not available (toxic below the potencies 6X and 3C). Instead of this, it was opted to *Calendula Officinalis* Mother Tincture pomade. This medicinal plant is indicated in wounds that ooze and hurt, with probable loss of substance. Ensures healing by first intention, eliminates suppuration and pain, favours phagocytosis and scarring, and prevents gangrene and large or deformed scars (keloids).¹² The mother tincture is a pure extract of the plant macerated in alcohol, maintaining its medicinal properties and having a greater power of action than the preparations

based on crushed dry parts. This tincture is used to prepare ointments or to make homeopathic dilutions that will then have various oral presentations (granules, globules, drops, triturations).

Treatment

The three goals of the treatment to solve the infection were:

- Stimulate the immune system.
- Favour the natural drainage of the body to remove the purulent content.
- Activate the specific cellular mechanisms of phagocytosis and cicatrization.

The visits were scheduled weekly to assess the evolution of the abscess and perform the acupuncture sessions.

Acupuncture: stimulation of the immune system by puncturing SP06 once a week with a metal needle of 0.30 × 30 mm (► **Fig. 3**).

Homeopathy: silicea 200C granules diluted in water, mixed with an ampoule of Homotoxicology that combines Psorinum 15X, Arsenicum album 10X, and Sulfur 12X. The dose prescribed for home was 0.5 mL orally twice a day.

Phytotherapy: Calendula ointment in mother tincture (M.T) to apply in the abscess twice a day, after disinfection and cleaning with chlorhexidine.

Diet: poor dry feed was modified by a high-end natural brand, which contains premium ingredients and lacks by-products and artificial additives. It was recommended not to give more low-quality homemade food. Instead, industrially unprocessed foods such as boiled meat or fish, vegetables and fruits could be offered. Their preparation being healthy in the form of stew to take advantage of the both. Salt, spices, and sauces were not allowed. In addition, we informed about the ingredients that could be toxic. This part of the treatment was the most difficult to control and there was not security over the follow-up of the advice and the good management of the feeding.

Follow-up and Outcomes

The control and examination of the abscess was performed every week. The prescribed treatment remained unchanged until the lesion was resolved. The following pictures show the healing process of the skin.

Day 7: the necrotic skin had detached. The dermis was exposed. The skin appeared raw, surrounding a central hole through which drains pus and blood. The scab formed in the contour was scarce (► **Fig. 4**).

Day 14: the abscess was closing from the inside to the outside. Through the drainage mechanism, the treatment prevented obstruction of the exit orifice and did not refill with pus (► **Fig. 5**).

Day 22: the hole had completely closed and no more pus or blood had accumulated. The drainage had finished. The



Fig. 3 Acupuncture needle in SP06 point that stimulates the immune system.



Fig. 4 Appearance of the lesion 7 days after beginning the treatment.



Fig. 5 Appearance of the lesion 14 days after beginning the treatment.



Fig. 6 Appearance of the lesion 22 days after beginning the treatment.

skin was to continue with the scar retraction. The bulge of the scar was well appreciated to the touch. The underlying dermis was still thickened (► **Fig. 6**).

Day 29: the scar had retracted and the skin had a lighter colour (► **Fig. 7**). The cures were to continue for a few more days to prevent recurrence or secondary infections. The bitch was discharged.

Discussion

The resolution of an infection depends mainly on the competence of the immune system. Antibiotics kill the micro-organisms, but the immune cells are those which clean the infectious focus and release the cells from the damaged tissue to restore their functions and heal the lesion.¹³ Therefore, it is possible to treat suppurative processes with techniques and drugs not officially classified as antibiotics because the key is in the stimulation of body functions. Such is the effect of Chinese traditional medicine and Homeopathy.¹⁴ The acupuncture needles and the homeopathic remedies have demonstrated their capacity to cure. The mechanism of action has yet to be discovered, although the high casuistry already supports their effectiveness.¹⁵

According to the above, the success of an alternative treatment to antibiotic therapy seems to be in its ability to stimulate the immune system,¹⁶ which will act very effectively and resolve the infection without the help of chemical active principles.



Fig. 7 Appearance of the lesion 29 days after beginning the treatment.

Of all the components of the treatment, it is worth mentioning silica. This homeopathic medicine can cure encapsulated abscesses whose resolution is usually surgical. Perhaps, said capsule does not disappear completely as some professionals maintain, but the lesion is not reproduced in the same place in general (excepting new traumas or life habits that predispose to infection). Pure experimentation with silica shows the high efficacy of silica remedy over infections¹⁷ and homeopathic clinical repertories confirm these results in human and animals.¹⁸

The main handicap of natural medicine is its sensibility and close relationship with vital needs.¹⁹ We know that nutrition, exercise, or hygiene are very important to recover the health and their lack compromise the efficacy of any kind of treatment. But acupuncture and homeopathy are more sensible to these facts than traditional medicine. The reason is obvious. If the way of action is stimulating body functions and immune answers naturally, the effectiveness will depend on the satisfaction of those vital needs. Despite of this, it has been pointed out that there had been no security regarding the follow-up of the nutritional suggestions made during the process. And it is necessary to say that the experience demonstrates that natural medicine works over these conditioning facts,²⁰ but sometimes you can see that bad feeding or sedentary life in example act like cause of the disease and stop the good job that an alternative therapy was making. In any case, medicine is holistic.

Finally, this kind of case report must be considered by scientific community. The results are obvious and cannot be ignored. An open mind is necessary to make experiments and clinical essays with positive hypothesis about how these therapies work. We must accept that there is more than one way to heal and recover the health.

Conflict of Interest

The author has no conflict of interest.

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