

ACCESSORY CIRCUMSTANCES AND IT'S IMPORTANCE IN THE LIGHT OF EPIGENETICS

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Abstract:

Epigenetics is a new branch of genetics that deals with the effect of environmental and other factors on our genetic expression. Not all genes are expressed at all times, they keep switching on and off depending upon circumstances any of the miasmatical causes in association with accessory circumstances may play the dominating role in the causation of any disease on which a particular type of disease may manifest in an individual case of sickness.

Keywords: Accessory circumstances, Epigenetics, Epigenome, Gene expression,

Introduction:

The term epigenetics was first used to refer to the complex interactions between the genome and the environment involved in the development and differentiation of higher organisms. Today, this term is used to refer to heritable alterations that are not due to changes in DNA sequence [1] our genes play an important role in our health, but so do our behaviors and environment, such as what we eat and how physically active we are. Epigenetics is the study of how our behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way our genes work. Unlike genetic changes, epigenetic changes are reversible and do not change your DNA sequence, but they can change how your body reads a DNA sequence.

Gene expression refers to how often or when proteins are created from the instructions within our genes. While genetic changes can alter which protein is made, epigenetic changes affect gene expression to turn genes "on" and "off." Via some complex biochemical mechanisms DNA methylation, Histone modification etc. Since our environment and behaviors, such as diet and exercise, can result in epigenetic changes, it is easy to see the connection between our genes and our behaviors and environment. It was Dr. Samuel Hahnemann's visionary understanding of health and disease that he stated centuries ago in the aphorism 5 of the Organon of Medicine:..."In these investigations, the ascertainable physical constitution of the patient (especially when the disease is chronic in nature), his moral and intellectual character, his occupation, mode of living and habits, his social and domestic relations, his age, sexual function, etc. are to be

taken into consideration." [2] Here Dr Hahnemann has clearly mentioned that in case of chronic disease accessory circumstances are to be considered in order to discover the fundamental cause which is generally due to chronic miasm (psora, syphilis and sycosis). Dr. Hahnemann has defined accessory circumstances in different aphorisms of Organon of medicine starting from aphorism no. 5 where he didn't use the term itself but have elaborated it in seven groups of circumstances which are necessary in order to trail back the fundamental cause of diseases which are chronic miasms as follows: 1. Ascertainable physical constitution of the patient, 2. Moral and intellectual character, 3. Occupation 4. Mode of living and habits, 5. Social and domestic relations, 6. Age, 7. Sexual function and etc. And then coined the term in aphorism 7 while in aphorism no.18 of sixth edition he uses another term for this which is accompanying modalities.[2]

What differentiates and makes homoeopathy superior to the other systems of medicine is its understanding of the importance of 'accessory circumstances'. Those of us who realize the importance of accessory circumstances, due to the knowledge of Organon (the so-called obsolete book, which in fact contains the most advanced knowledge), put homoeopaths in a more advantageous position, when compared to the other physicians.[3] According to Rene Dubos, the origin of the disease will generally be found in several factors that must concur to result in ill-health. But their effects will differ profoundly from individual to individual, since the effects

depend on the individual's emotions and reactions to stressful situations and on the accessory circumstances in which these situations occur.[4] A detailed discussion on this topic from the 'Organon of the Art of Healing' will make us understand how the case taking or rather case perceiving is necessary and how it should actually scan each aspect of the patient's life, i.e., physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual. Let us now examine the role of accessory circumstances plays in homoeopathic prescription.

Accessory circumstances can be looked at with three views: 1- As a producer or Modifier of diseases

2-As maintainer of diseases or obstacle to cure. 3-

As therapeutic hints or choice of remedy
Epigenetics" now refers to events "above the genome" that regulate the expression of genetic information without altering the DNA sequences.

Socioeconomic status and social conditions, such as poverty and poor education, for an individual, along with the type of work, job security, food security and social support, as well as the flexibility for self-management of a disorder are more powerful determinants of health

outcome than access to care [5]. Furthermore, the nature of early life experiences – abuse or neglect versus establishing stable attachment to parents or caregivers – is critical for the lifelong trajectory of health. This trajectory is dependent on brain-body interactions in which the brain is the central organ of perceiving and adapting to experiences and all these are more related to the development of non-communicable diseases. Chronic non-communicable diseases (NCDs)—including but not limited to diabetes, respiratory diseases, cardiovascular disease (CVD), cancer, mental disorders, neurological and musculoskeletal degenerative conditions—now represent the leading causes of disability and human morality.[6]

The epidemic of socially-rooted, lifestyle-driven non-communicable diseases has now overtaken infectious diseases as the leading cause of human mortality. For treatment and prevention of the "non-communicable diseases" that afflict societies worldwide, there are no "magic bullets" like penicillin has been for bacterial infections, but rather a combination of behavioral and psychosocial interventions combined with

pharmaceutical agents, where appropriate, that facilitate change and help tip the balance in a direction towards prevention or treatment. This pertains not only to cardiovascular and metabolic diseases but also to psychiatric illnesses such as depression and anxiety disorders, including PTSD, that often have systemic co-morbidities.

Coming back to the homoeopathic concept of the development of diseases We all know well that the chronic diseases arise purely due to the 'fundamental cause or the chronic miasms namely 'syphilis', sycosis and most importantly the 'psora', which is the basic producer of all chronic diseases. It is an established fact that no robust constitution has been able to alleviate psora by itself. Moreover, it keeps on adding up and increasing in each successive year.[7]

Dr. Hahnemann has mentioned in aphorism 81 footnote that the transformation of psora into chronic disease depends upon various accessory circumstances, which are as follows:[8]

Climate and the particular natural quality of the location in which one lives; Extremely irregular upbringing of youth- the neglected, distorted or overrefined development of body or spirit; Misuse of body or spirit in one's vocation and/or in life relationships; Diet and regimen; Human passions; Customs, manners and habits of many kinds; Mode of thought and emotions.

Let us take one of the accessory circumstances given above, like the human passion. It deals with emotions and individual feelings, which are strong, for example, intensely zealous or ardent. It is an intense emotion to compel any action. There is always an extra force and energy attached to whatever he does- be it food, business or any other daily life activity. A passionate person has emotions distinguished from reason. His anger, love temper is always very intense and vehement which destroys his inner calmness and causes a turmoil inside him. Such activities in the long run affect a person's health profoundly, deranging it and leading to various diseases among which Hypertensive Disorders lead them all. Many more examples may be cited on each of the above-mentioned factors. These are daily witnessed in practice, it is therefore unnecessary to give any illustrative examples. This information of the accessory

circumstances which have been utilized and has been an integral part of homoeopathic prescribing, for over two centuries, has only lately been stumbled upon by the so-called modern system of medicine and that too in the fragmentary form, as we understand from the study of Preventive and Social Medicine and other such subjects. These 'accessory circumstances' in homocopathy include all that is contained under various headings, viz., the exciting and maintaining causes of diseases, hygiene, surroundings, nutrition, sociology, psychology, moral values, occupational diseases and hazards etc.

Conclusion:

The future of medicine must recognize the complexity of the social, physical, developmental and genetic influences on health and disease and take an "integrative medicine" approach that treats the individual person as well as the disease and takes into consideration causal factors based

upon each individual's "lived experience" during the whole life course. Organon taught us regarding the accessory circumstances- the circumstances/events that help for prescribing; remind us as an obstacle to recovery; obstacles as a maintaining factor that demand removal and the circumstances which accelerate to convert the miasm or transform one miasm to another. This is a great gift from a man (Hahnemann) who was born with uncommon wisdom, who led us to the enlightened path of taking care of the patient and all his circumstances, an understanding of some of which are helpful in prescribing and some being harmful, demand removal; their removal itself making the recovery- the wisdom of healing art!

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