

Case of *Latrodectus mactans* (1)

Carmine, 24 years old, iron worker, comes accompanied by his wife that has persuaded him to have an examination, trusting a homeopathic cure may help him. The two present themselves as a couple in harmony although they got married almost 6 years before because of the birth of a beautiful daughter ... not really wanted.

The wife begins:

"Since my husband had the accident he's not been the same. He's frightened now, he doesn't sleep at night anymore and I'm convinced he's also got other troubles he doesn't want to tell me to avoid worrying me"

I ask Carmine what has happened:

"I was working in the factory when an accident happened and an electric cable came off... It was a miracle I didn't die, but I got a big shock and burnt my left arm.

They had to reanimate me because my heart had stopped beating, but I think this happened more because of the fear that because of something else ... I'd seen it coming right to my face and I thought 'I'm-dying-now-dying-I'll-never-see-my-daughter-and-my-wife-again ...'"

While he's saying this the patient turns pale and his forehead is beading with sweat; at that moment I notice his evident, enduring scared and anguished expression.

I ask what kind of lesions he got:

"My left hand and part of my arm got burnt. But it regained all of its functionality and the skin has grown well again, but afterwards I got this anxiousness and then I don't feel my arm anymore ... I've had so many medical examinations, also the one with the needles in the flesh, but I don't feel my arm anymore and they tell me there's nothing wrong with me and that maybe it's caused by the burns I had.

But after the burns healed my arm felt well; it's been the anxiousness that didn't make me feel it anymore.

When I'm calmer I feel it again, but as soon as I get upset I feel like my arm isn't mine anymore and it gets to my heart, so I get frightened it will stop beating again".

I ask when his heart stopped beating:

"During the accident, it really stopped and I was dying with cardiac arrest".

I ask if he has other troubles:

"I feel my chest aches, in a vice-like grip and then I have pins and needles in my arm and my hand and I get frightened ... I feel it's on me".

I ask what he feels is on him:

"The anxiousness ... it's terrible, doctor, I'd never felt like that before, but it's terrible... it's just one moment and after that you're not here anymore.

It started in your chest and you can't breathe anymore; it comes suddenly ... and I still feel it and I can't breathe and I think I'm dying and my heart doesn't beat anymore... it's already happened to me, death stared me in the face and I didn't like it at all".

"And then my shoulders hurt and the pain goes down to my hands"

I ask what he can do to ease the pain:

"I take a hot shower if I'm at home... but if I'm at work I can't do a thing and I'm afraid I'll die"

His wife intervenes:

"This is no living.

He always says he's dying and I get worried, too; I'm not very strong and I become frightened when he talks like that and then I feel ill, too, because I see he wants to let his feelings go and doesn't manage with me because I become frightened, too.

Ever since he had the accident he even doesn't want to make love anymore like we did before because he says he's afraid"

I ask how his sleep is doing:

"I don't sleep well. I always have bad dreams; I dream, I fall into a shaft and I never get to the bottom ... it's terrible; I feel myself going into this dark thing and I don't know where I'm going"

I ask if he's taking any medicines. His wife intervenes:

"A pharmacy you'd say ... my husband knows medicines better than a doctor does, ever since he was a child ... his mother always says so, too. If I don't pay attention he'd even take my pill".

I ask Carmine to confirm this:

"Medicines are like an assurance for me and to be sure I always take twice the description amount so I can be sure they'll be effective, and immediately ... I notice it; if it doesn't happen I'll take another one immediately".

I record the following symptoms:

According to the analysis of this record and to the experiences with cases of this kind I observed previously, especially in patients tending to take enormous quantities of medicines, I decide to prescribe CACTUS GRANDIFLORUS 10Mk.

After 3 weeks Carmine calls me and tells me he hasn't noticed any change at all. After a few days I talk to his wife who confirms what her husband told me. Convinced about my prescription I decide for another potency of the same remedy, but another 2 weeks later I talk to Carmine who tells me he only notices the constraint feeling in his chest is getting worse and his sleep is getting worse.

Therefore I decide to examine Carmine again: I find him in the same condition as during the first examination with his diaphragm evidently strained, accompanied by very hasty breathing.

I ask Carmine if he feels like having his examination alone:

"What I feel above all at this moment is that I can't breathe... I'm afraid I won't breathe anymore ..."

I ask for explanation:

"All at once I can't breathe anymore... no, I can breathe but I'm afraid I can't anymore ... I'm afraid my lungs may stop breathing like my heart stopped beating... otherwise I'm the same if not worse as the other time: I feel like my heart's closing, I feel a grip on my chest and I don't sleep well ... I don't remember my dreams and I feel like I spend a frightful night and I won't wake up again"

I ask how things are going with his wife:

"I can't make love to her anymore... it won't erect when I'm at it and then I'll think about it all day when I'm working... I've been absent minded the other day thinking about my wife and I had to stop working because I thought if I was inattentive I could have another accident.

When I feel pins and needles in my left arm now, I'm blocked ... I can't move it anymore... I get upset and think if I force it who knows what will happen"

I ask if he's still feeling better taking a hot shower:

"It's the nicest thing there is ... I even have two or three showers a day ... very hot and then my anxiousness disappears ... afterwards I feel relieved all over and the blood turning into circulation again. But I must not burn myself because otherwise I feel weak and not well"

Attracted by the symptom of getting better with a hot shower and reading the previous record again I decide to prescribe LATRODECTUS MACTANS 30 CH, also supported by the symptom of 'Fear losing breath' and 'Respiration gasping' I

hadn't considered previously. Giving more attention to him I have also the feeling of a possible good picture of a spider remedy.

After some days I receive a telephone call from Carmine telling me, very distressed, to be prey to a continuous 'vomiting crisis' since two days. His wife says Carmine has started throwing up two days earlier and by now he only throws up gastric juices, but her husband is terrorized by the presence of some streaks of blood.

I prescribe a placebo.

After some days his wife calls me again asking me if I prescribed any sleeping potion because Carmine is suffering great somnolence since he started taking the placebo and it keeps him from going to work and he spends sleeping at least 16 hours a day. I recommend to interrupt the placebo but the somnolence continues for almost another week.

After 4 weeks I meet Carmine again who's asked to return for an examination:

"I feel very well but I want to be sure you didn't give me a sleeping potion because I don't want other accidents at work anymore.

I must be sure because there's nothing written on the small bottle and I don't know what's in those drips.

Otherwise I'm very well... it seems to me I've woken up from a bad dream and I'd be all right if I hadn't got this worry that I'd fall asleep at work"

I ask Carmine if he feels very sleepy during the day:

"No, not at all... I sleep seven hours a night but I'm afraid I'm much too calm now compared to the way I was before; but what did you give to me?! Can I know or is it your secret?"

I reassure Carmine trying to explain to him something about homeopathy.

"My wife told me these medicines were good, but I didn't think so very good ...with all those medicines the doctor has given me before I hadn't improved a bit"

I ask how things are going with his wife:

"Very well. The drips are good for that, too?"

I answer that if he's feeling more serene it's possible he can even have better sexual relations:

"In fact I'm much better at it ... I don't feel frightened. But the most important thing is my arm isn't asleep anymore. First I was insecure and I thought I was going to have another accident, because my arm didn't hold me anymore... and then I thought if my arm hurts the heart is damaged and could stop beating again.

And I always felt the cold before and now I've turned to be the way I was before; I manage to work wearing the light overall only and nothing underneath"

I ask how his breathing is doing:

"I even feel fine about that... I don't get frightened anymore about my lungs stopping breathing ... I've always had that obsession and I even got a stomach-ache when I thought about that"

I ask how his sleeping is doing:

"I've started to remember some dreams.

I had a very strange one in which I was with a woman that wanted to kill me ... she was very beautiful and naked but I knew she was dangerous and I'd better get home ... and then I wasn't interested in being unfaithful to my wife and I told her so.

Then she told me she was my wife in disguise and that she'd wanted to put me to a test to see if I was faithful to her and so we went home together and I thought I'd been fortunate because if I hadn't answered the right way who knows how many punches I'd have got!"

I decide to prescribe LATRODECTUS MACTANS 200 CH.

I see Carmine again after six months:

"I feel changed, I'm different and I feel more serene.

I work calmly and I get better on with my wife... formerly she always troubled me because often I wasn't at home and I didn't like to go home because I felt she was stronger and I wasn't the head of the family.

But we've talked a lot; first I didn't want to talk because she's more clever than I am and she always made a fool of me at words.

We've understood each other better and we're starting to behave like a real husband and wife and I'm also feeling closer to my children because I don't only notice her being a mother but I think that I'm their father, too, and I've noticed they're coming to me now that they're growing up.

That's nice because I feel more important in my house and I feel warmth in my family that maybe wasn't there because of me, too.

I haven't had any trouble with my hand or with my arm anymore; I really feel fine and have to thank my wife for being like this... and you of course, but if there aren't any women we are only half the men"

More than four years have gone and the patient hasn't had any big trouble until now. I regularly check on Carmine and his family and repeated the prescription of LATRODECTUS occasionally for common episodes of a cold.

Another time Carmine cut his left hand and needed 24 stitches and the remedy promptly took effect without doing an antibiotic therapy.