

Case of Mephitis Puthorius

Alessio is a five year-old-boy. He is a lively child, a real romp. I have been perceiving his presence since his arrival in the waiting-room: I can hear a turmoil all around, followed by his mother's scolding culminating in a sonorous smack soon after Alessio lifts his hands against another child.

Once entered in my room, Alessio looks like as if he were punished. He sits transversally on his chair, swinging his legs and bumping his feet repeatedly against my desk.

He stares at his mother who returns his glances severely. The woman often repeats him to stay still, but Alessio keeps swinging his legs more and more frequently. After a while the mother turns her false-gently words to her child into real threats. Alessio reacts by looking at her as if he were issuing a challenge. As soon as his mother re-starts talking to me, Alessio begins kicking his mother's chair or just moving slightly, always staring at her provocatively - as to show his mother that he is not afraid, that she cannot reproach him for such light movements.

When I try to establish a direct contact with Alessio, he does not reply. He just stares at me, attentively, stealthily. I suggest the child several games, I also tell him he can draw or mould if he wants to, but without any result. Alessio seems being interested in what is said and, without uttering a word, he explicits his feelings with eloquent and lively face expressions.

I have got the feeling the mother is using a tone of circumstance because of their presence in front of me, but the sudden fits of temper of the woman give me the idea of a brusque person, easily irritable. During the consultation the woman will let me understand that it was her husband who insisted to try a homeopathic therapy. I cannot understand the reason why the woman seems being in conflict with this decision.

Alessio is the youngest of four children. Due to the consistent difference in age between the child and his elder brothers, I assume he might have been undesired.

The woman reports spontaneously:

"He is a very intelligent boy and he has never risen any problems, apart the asthma which started when Alessio was only three. Alessio has been following a cortisone therapy, but we would like to stop it"

I enquire on the concept of "we would like":

"It was my husband who wanted Alessio to follow a homeopathic therapy. This not only because of the health problems the cortisone may cause, but also because

Alessio is tremendously lively and since he has started taking the cortisone, he has been a real disaster. It is really difficult to keep him".
She is losing her patience and Alessio lowers his eyes sadly.

I collect information about his asthma:

"At the moment he has continuous attacks, but when he started being affected by the disease, he was only three, he had attacks only during the night"

I ask the woman whether she reminds anything about the period during which Alessio started the affection:

"Each evening, at bed time it was a issue, he didn't even want to hear about going to sleep ... as soon as we started insisting on it, you know one must sleep ... he would start with cough. It was at that time he began with asthma"

I ask whether they could manage to soothe his pain:

"He felt better once he got up and was driven around by car, but this in the past. It is for this reason that the paediatrician announced it was an allergy to dust and ordered to have some tests made on him, but the child has been getting worse and worse, nothing has changed.

Sometimes, because of strong cough, he vomits and now he will also feel sick when we give him the brochus-dilater ..."

She adds with disappointment:

"He is so lively, it is impossible to keep him calm ..."

Alessio kicks his mother's chair with decision, and as a consequence the woman corrects her assertion as if she meant to justify her words:

"But he is not a troublesome child. I have to say he has been a forward child in comparison to his brothers. He was also born one month before the expected birth date. We make fun by saying he was in a hurry to get out ..."

The child smiles, with satisfaction.

I ask for clarifications:

"He is like a devil ... he is really hypercinetic and a very intelligent child.

At kindergarten his teachers are enthusiastic, one of them even suggested to send Alessio to a special school, he is very intelligent ... He doesn't need to be told twice what he has to do. And he will get angry if you repeat things to him, he makes us understand he is not stupid, it is as if he were offended.

It is enough for him to see how to do things just once, then he will be able to repeat it perfectly. The second time he tries it he can do it even better. But he is a devil, he never stays still. He is obedient but - you see - he keeps swinging his legs. He's never still"

I ask whether this is his usual behaviour:

“It is as if his legs were on fire. He never keeps them still and also when he is in bed, he always uncover them ... he has refused to wear his socks and shoes since he was a baby. As soon as we arrive at home, he takes them off ... but you know, things are not so easy, his little feet do not really smell nice!

While in bed he always uncovers his legs, and it took me such a long time to understand I had to leave them uncovered or he would make such a mess in the bed ... then I started making him wear a two-piece-pyjamas, instead of a one-piece. This gave me the opportunity to put him on lighter trousers. From then he started to sleep better”

I enquire about the smell of his feet:

“I’ve to admit he has always had this problem, but he is the same as his father, so we do not pay much attention any more. His ears are the issue. They are really impossible ... they have been since he was affected by otitis.

It was as if somebody had put rotten flesh into them ...”

Despite the tone of the conversation, Alessio shows a proud attitude.

I ask for further information:

“I don’t know ... they smelt bad. Many tests were made, but nothing was found out. His excrement and his urine also smell bad, and his sweat too ...”

- Alessio looks at me and smiles with pride -

“We don’t know how to handle the situation”

I ask Alessio if he enjoys taking baths, but the child keeps looking at me sharply, without answering my question:

“Woe is me each time I try to bathe him! ... He doesn’t want to wash himself, no way to wash him, if water is hot above all. He just enjoys cold water. He has been playing with water since he was a baby, but no way to have him playing with warm water ... he has to play with the very cold one coming from the tap”

After a long silence during which Alessio seems amused by what his mother is saying, the woman adds:

“Another thing we have been thinking about is some form of allergy. He has started scratching himself since he was given the cortisone”

I ask for clarifications:

“We think it’s because of cortisone therapy when we gave it to him in the morning he scratched his eyes and his scalp like a little monkey. In the evening the itching disappeared. Soon after dinner ... he scratched obsessively, but after the digestion had taken place he felt fine.

At breakfast he doesn’t have anything, he has never eaten anything ... he says he smells (flatulence and meteorism) and he starts having diarrhoea ... This is true because if he defecates after lunch ... that won’t be diarrhoea ... but it will in the

morning. We think he is eager to start a new day and to go to school. He is always happy in the morning, but a really romp.”

I ask what happens if they stop the cortisone therapy:

“Even if he stops the cortisone therapy he itches, and now there has been no modification”

I ask Alessio which is his favourite game, but he won't answer. His mother answers for him:

“There is no favourite game, he enjoys any game and he loves performing well. We have the impression he is a bit neurotic ... as his father”

-Alessio smiles, satisfied -

“He has initiative and he enjoys doing anything. In many manual works he is even more successful than his elder brothers. His most successful activity is to invent stories and fairy tales ... he won't lie, but he can make up stories and he prefers to invent them on his own instead to listen to ours. He wants to show us his stories are better than the books' and for this reason his teachers ...

He has such a vivid fantasy and he invents things we cannot say were they come from ...”

Once again I try to establish a direct relationship with the child, unsuccessfully. I ask whether there is a favourite tale, cartoon or character:

“His favourite character is a gnome who is always doing something ... a sort of inventor who is the chief of a clan who manage all the animals of the wood...”

I ask if there is a favourite animal:

“He's fascinated by those Indian children who ride the elephants ... he says that either with persuasion or with constraint he would manage to be obeyed”

I repertorize the following:

MIND; COMPREHENSION; easy (SI-154) (43) ***
EAR; DISCHARGES; offensive (K286, K303, G242, G254) (61) ***
EAR; DISCHARGES; fetid (K286, G242) (35) ***
URINE; ODOR; offensive (K687, G587) (putrid) (strong) (115) **
RESPIRATION; DIFFICULT; sleep; during (K771, G656) (47) **
RESPIRATION; ASTHMATIC; sleep; during, coming on (K765, G651) (16) **
MIND; FANCIES; exaltation of (K41, SI-466, G33) (vivid) (Ideas; abundant) (Plans) (Theorizing) (132) **
STOOL; ODOR; offensive (K640, G547) (putrid) (cadaverous) (179) *
PERSPIRATION; ODOR; offensive (K1298, SI-503, G1071) (fetid) (putrid) (eggs, like spoiled) (sickly) (120) *
MIND; RESTLESSNESS, nervousness; tendency (K72, SI-835, G57) (Activity; restless) (Anguish; driving from place to place) (Delirium; restless) (Excitement) (Fear; driving him from place to place, restlessness) (Impatience) (Wander; desire

I am a bit surprised by the symptoms of the analysis. In this case I detect clear symptoms of MEPHITIS PUTORIUS, contrarily to what normally happens for a so called small remedy. I don't use to take so many symptoms for a case, but in this occasion I am really surprised to see that the most of his simptomatology is known for Mephitis. Moreover, the few data in literature describe cases with similar simptomatology. Also the information on the ethology of Mephitis is quite suggestive.

The skunk is a very overactive animal. One of the mammals who has a quick metabolism, living in a day the same activity that other animals lives in much more time. A very foxy but intelligent creature, absolutely determined in his action.

Thus I make my decision for Mephitis 30CH.

After a week I suggest the parents to diminish the cortisone. After three weeks I suggest a further diminishing and Alessio starts with the first symptoms of broncospasms which we can manage quite well with the somministration of some drops of the remedy in some water.

After seven weeks Alessio manifests a medium otitis with a quite offensive episode of diarrhoea, smelling like *old cheese*. After this episode the broncospasm does not appear any more.

Despite the good results achieved, the mother decides to consult a dermatologist, incredulous of the good homeopathic results.

I meet the child three months later:

"He really feels better, but he really stinks, so much that he starts to be resented by it and said that he wants to go to live with the animals, so nobody will bother him saying that *he stinks*.

We don't know how to handle the situation so we went to see a dermatologist who said it is a hormonal matter, due to his precocity. He said he would give us something but he wants to wait your opinion since Alessio has an allergy ..."

I am astonished by the respect used in my regards by the colleague, which I do not even know, and I stress she could have asked my opinion before seeing a colleague.

The woman ignores my words and goes on highlighting that actually the child did not show that improvement she expected.

She says:

"He his really lively, but we can admit he his not troublesome ... Yet he is really hyperactive and at school he is really bossy: he always manages to hit those who won't listen to him ... just one slap and it is enough to knock them down. At the park he always plays with elder children, and when they do not let him play he will hit and hurt them ..."

I enquire about the itching:

“He itches himself obsessively till digestion time, after he has had his meal the itching will disappear, but no way to feed him at breakfast”

I ask if she has noticed anything else:

“Legs are hot, you can feel the warmth by touching them, but he doesn’t uncover anymore. He doesn’t toss in his sleep anymore and this has been quite clear since he has followed your homeopathic therapy”

I try to get more information regarding Alessio’s reactions to bad smell:

“And how can we avoid to make him notice it?”

It was as if he was proud of it, since dad’s feet smell too, but there is no comparison to Alessio’s ... and it’s not matter of his feet only, my godness!”

This time Alessio is quiet, and his mother’s words don’t make him pride at all. I’d say his reaction is quite opposite than last one.

Anyway his mother is not helping him to face the matter.

I try to make the woman understand, speaking clearly so that Alessio too can understand my words, that I do not feel the problem is so evident. I also say I do not think it is a medical matter. I affirm I think it is a bit rash to say he is a forward child.

Despite my words I do not think the woman has caught the message.

I have to admit I am a bit disappointed by the woman’s reactions and I ask her to see Alessio, next time, in the presence of his father.

The woman nods unsatisfied, asserting her husband is very busy.

I prescribe a placebo and meanwhile the itching slightly improves.

After three months Alessio shows a medium otitis. This time the dilution 30CH won’t help much, but with the 200CH the pain disappears in less than one hour.

Three months later the whole family is affected by a gastroenteric virus and Alessio is the only one who reacts brilliantly by taking his remedy, while all the others go on with the symptoms for more than a week.

After this episode Alessio’s father convinces the mother to have the other two children seen by me.

I meet Alessio again, two months after the virus. The father is the typical successful manager, very kind and rather professional. I get the impression he has a good relationship with the child, he his affectionate with him and does not talk about Alessio with the same tone used by the mother.

He starts:

“We are so enthusiastic. I heard about homeopathy abroad, but I didn’t think about these results. If only we had known it before ... we would have avoided so many troubles, to Alessio above all.

Now he feels good. He is slightly less hungry , but I have to admit he was really greedy. Anyway he hasn’t lost weight, on the contrary he seems even strengthened.

His spirit seems improved too ... he is less bully and wrangler and, above all, his teachers say he stays with children of his same age who formerly despised. In the past during the breaks he just wanted to play with older children, while now he has more relationships with his fellows”

I enquire about Alessio mood:

“He was a leader, he wanted to be at any rate. It seemed as if it was difficult for him to play with children of his age, and with elders he wanted to lead ... he didn’t care about possible clashes. Contrarily he seemed happy to show he was stronger than the elders.

His teachers were quizzed by the fact that Alessio had this need on the physical point of view, indeed they have always told us he is a forward child ... intellectually first of all. They say that normally it does not happen that children want to impose their personalities on both plans and this was quite evident in Alessio’s behaviour. Clearly he is a lively child, but we are glad to notice he is able to play with younger children too. We have to admit he is rather selective and he chooses most clever children to play with.

Now he has just started using the computer and he is already better than his elder brother”

I ask about his relationship with his brothers and for the very first time Alessio intervenes spontaneously:

“You know they annoy me less now ...

I care less. I beat Carlo at Doom game (very violent computer game). Then Giorgio allows me to use his bike and Andrea brought me with him when he went skiing. Beforehand, they didn’t because I was too young ...”

I am astonished by Alessio’s tone which is not the one of a six-year-old child.

His father goes on:

“We went to the mountain and he was promoted to a further course. Last time he came with us and he followed us along the tracks ... he is a boy of promise. But he always managed to move, he is really agile ...”

I ask Alessio which is his favourite game:

“I love skiing, but just because I want to learn aquatic ski”

I ask whether he knows anybody who practise it:

“Of course ... my father when he was young. Then he had an accident and had to stop it. We still have his ski, he didn’t want to get rid of it. One day it will be mine. It is a special ski”

The father looks at Alessio with satisfaction, while the mother does not seem to share all the pride.

I ask Alessio what's so special in that sport:

“You can run onto the water. It's not that easy, you know?”

I tried swimming and I can quite well with flippers, but it's not the same as to go with the ski”

I insist on this matter and ask how it was like his experience with swim, but it's the father who answer:

“Water has been a problem for him. At home he used to seek it, but he didn't enjoy swimming ... he was scared. We couldn't understand that, since his mother and I both love water. Yet, Alessio has always enjoyed playing with, but it was such an effort for him to learn swimming”

I ask Alessio for some clarifications:

“I felt awkward at the seaside, I couldn't move as I wanted too and if I moved badly or too much I would drink. Then daddy showed me how to do it slowly and I learnt ... but I learnt by myself to run quickly. I would have never managed learning to swim by myself”

I stress that somebody must have taught him to walk:

“I was really young and I don't remember ... but I don't think it was my mother”

I remain dumbfounded by this last assertion. His mother's expression does not change at all, while his father is a bit embarrassed and seems as if he wanted to say something.

I ask Alessio something about the gnome:

“My new teacher, the one who teaches us how to write suggested me to become a writer. I also told her some of my stories and she understood that I invent them while I'm telling them”

I insist on the gnome:

“His name is *Piffero* and he is the most cunning. He is the one with best ideas but he is not the leader because he is not the oldest. In my last tale I changed him a bit ...”

I notice some reticence in Alessio's words, but I insist and he asks me:

“But are you sure you are really interested in him?”

Formerly Piffero had a house under a rather big mushroom, but he lived alone. I thought that now Piffero has more friends the story will change a bit. Now he lives in a tree with other animals and gnomes like him”

I ask him where are Piffero's parents:

“I never met any gnome with his parents ... I have never thought about it before. But in the book I have, there are ... Piffero has no beard, so he must have his

parents ... I will invent them in my next story and then I will come and tell it to you. No, no ... let me put them right now, you gave me a good idea”
