

Review Article

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## CLASSIFICATION OF CONSTITUTIONAL TYPES IN HOMEOPATHY

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### Abstract:

Constitutional prescribing remains central to homeopathic practice, emphasizing the treatment of the person as a whole—physical, mental, emotional

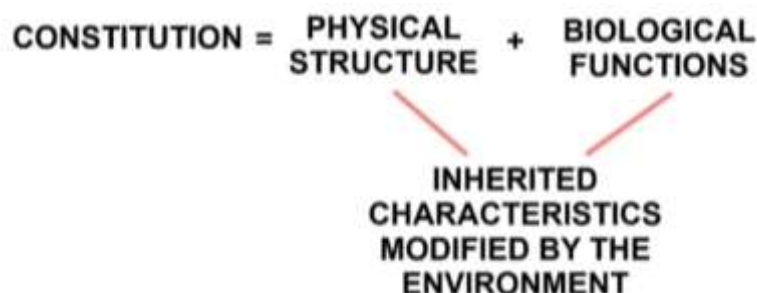
This paper presents a comprehensive study of different constitutional types in homeopathic practice, specific mental dispositions leading physical expressions, adaptability, miasmatic tendencies, PQRS symptoms, to guide practitioners toward deeper constitutional insight.

**Keywords:** Constitution, Individualization, Homoeopathy, Remedy essence, Prescription

### Word meaning

*The constitution word is a Latin derivative of "Constituere" or "Constitute" which means to set up, to make up or to establish.*

It is the structure, composition, physical make up or nature of something consisting inherited qualities modified by environment.



## DEFINITION OF CONSTITUTION IN HOMOEOPATHY

Constitution is defined as the physical and mental makeup of a person which is expressed through his physical built, characteristics, desires, aversions, reactions including emotional and intellectual attributes.

Stuart close defines constitution as,

"Constitution is the aggregate of hereditary characters influenced more or less by the environment which determines the individual's reaction, successful or unsuccessful to the stress of environment".

Dr. James Tyler Kent says,

"Physical constitution is the external disorder following disorder in the man (person), the vital force".

Paracelsus says ,

"No knowledge is perfect unless it includes an understanding of the origin – that is, the beginning; and as all man's diseases originate in his constitution, it is necessary that his constitution should be known if we wish to know his diseases."

### Historical insights on constitution

**Hippocrates (460 BC- 377 BC)** in his "Vis Medicatrix Natura" says that each and every individual has his nature that cannot be changed.

He classified the constitution into Two types- Short and Thick and Long and Thin. **Aristotle (384 BC-322 BC)** was the first person in history who grouped individuals under different headings.

In his essays on "Physiognomy" he classified the human beings on the basis of

Size, Built, Nature etc.

He also described the peculiar signs of the individual, of diseases and of humours.

- **Galen** described the human constitution as Sanguine, Bilious, Phlegmatic and Nervous. **Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann (1755- 1843)** who is the founder of homoeopathy,

Hahnemann used his knowledge of the Hippocratic literature to understand the nature

of the constitution, temperament and predispositions and their relationship to the signs and symptoms.

In The Organon of Medicine, Dr Samuel Hahnemann has used the term 'constitution' most often to refer to underlying distinguishing characteristics of an individual present at birth, as in his description of *'the indescribable diversity of distinct congenital human constitutions' that, along with such extrinsic factors as climate, education, diet, morals, customs and habits, have contributed to the formation of the variety of chronic diseases*. He tells the physician to consider 'the evident physical constitution of the patient (especially in chronic affections), his affective and intellectual character, his activities, his way of life, his habits, his social position, his family relationships, his age, his sexual life, etc' in the determination of treatment. In other places, he recognizes the contribution of psychical, as well as physical characteristics to the constitution' He included different human constitutions under three miasmatic groups- Psoric, Sycotic and Syphilitic

Dr. Samuel Hahnemann also included the observations of Ludwig Christian Junker in the main body of text of The Chronic Diseases. about classical temperaments and various diathetic constitutions, the signs and symptoms produced by the suppression of psora. (The Chronic Diseases, Volume I)

### **THE NEED OF CLASSIFYING THE CONSTITUTIONS**

- The study of constitution can be compared with 'Physiognomy' which is an art of judging the character of something by their general appearance (face, physique etc). But, diagnosis of a person's constitution is deeper than just Physiognomy.
- Every person inherits some characters from their parents and some characters are acquired from the surrounding environment. So, constitution is the mixture of the internal and external characteristics of an individual.
- A homeopath tries to individualize a patient based on his physical make up, his morals, social behavior, his desires and aversions etc. So, the knowledge of constitution helps in individualization of patient.
- The diagnosis of a person's constitution helps in selection and prescribing remedies, to decide the dose and potency of selected medicine and ultimately for the treatment of the diseases.

- In Homeopathy, the nature of patient is diagnosed by his Heredity, Susceptibility, Temperament, Miasms, Diathesis and the predominant conditions of mind and body.

## OTHER TYPES OF CONSTITUTION

- **Count Cesar Mattei (1809-1896)** divided human constitution into three broad groups- Sanguine (blood), Lymphatic (lymph) and Mixed (blood and lymph).
- **Dr. Leon Vannier (1880-1963)** who was a French homeopath classified the human constitution into Carbonic, Phosphoric and Fluoric mainly based on the predominance of chemical elements.
- **Ernst Kretschmer (1888-1964)** he was a German psychiatrist.

He classified the constitution into three groups, Asthenic, Athletic and Pyknic.

1. Asthenic (weak, schizophrenics) - Tall and thin, lean narrow physical built with poor skin secretions, narrow shoulders, muscles, delicate bones, narrow flat chest, sharp angles of ribs, thin stomach.
2. Athletic-Strongly developed skeleton, musculature and skin. A middle-sized person with projecting shoulders, wide chest, firm stomach.
3. Pyknic- Thick, maniac depressive, short and plump physique.

- **Dr. William Herbert Scheldon (1898-1977)** classified the human body into three basic shapes known as "Somatotypes"- Ectomorph, Endomorph and Mesomorph.
  1. Ectomorph (Bony types)- Thin, tall and lean with not much muscles.
  2. Endomorph (Fatty type)-Wide bodied, Heavy set, person who is strong as a Bull.
  3. Mesomorph (Muscular type)- High percentage of muscles with little fat, small waist.
- **Bazin** classified constitution into three types Scrofulous, Gouty and Syphilitic.
- **Dr. Eduard Von Grauvogl (1811-1877)** He was a German homeopathic physician. Genuine constitutional theory was put forward by Edward von Grauvogl, whose Textbook of Homoeopathy was published in 1865 .In 1870, he classified human constitution into three different types.-
  - 1) Carbo-nitrogenoid (excess of carbon and nitrogen in tissues and blood).
  - 2) Oxygenoid (excess of oxygen)
  - 3) Hydrogenoid (excess of water)

This classification is widely accepted by most of the homeopaths. This is based on different biochemical content of the body. Dr. J.H. Clarke in his book "Constitutional remedies" explained about these classifications of Grauvogl. We can also find Homoeopathic constitutional remedies based on this classification.

### **1.CARBO-NITROGENOID CONSTITUTION**

This is caused by an excess of carbon and nitrogen.



#### **PATHOPHYSIOLOGY**

Formed by Excess of carbon and nitrogen.

Tissues cannot absorb sufficient oxygen.

Insufficient oxygenation causes lack of nutrients. which leads to deficiency disorders. This leads to functional impairments.

- At the same time, carbo-nitrogenous matter accumulates and retention happens.

#### **PHYSICAL FEATURES**

- Marked obesity, followed by emaciation in later stage.
- Skin- Dirty and unhealthy with very offensive perspiration.
- Nail- Dry, brittle, often found longitudinally striated.

#### **CLINICAL FEATURES**

- Disturbed functions of mind and bodily organs like heart, lungs, kidneys,spleen, stomach etc.
- Pulse- Rapid.
- Respiration- Fast, shallow, restlessness.
- GIT- Flatulence, constipation or diarrhoea.

- Urinary- Increased uric acid and oxalates in urine, absence of chlorides.
- Nervous system- Vertigo, ataxia, fatigue, somnolence, yawning, epilepsy etc.
- Extremities- Gouty swellings, inflammatory nodosities at the small joints.
- Mind- Mostly tired individuals, dullness, Hypochondriacs, irritable & impatient.

## MODALITIES

Aggravation by:

Anything that increases the use of energy. Examples- Overeating, exertion, sexual-excess Everything which increases albuminoids and hydrocarbons. Everything which increases the alkalinity and decreases the acidity in the body.

Amelioration by:

Rest, having sufficient sleep, balanced diet.

## DIETETIC MANAGEMENT

- Foods like bread, cow's milk, yogurt, butter, seasonal fruits, excess of liquid diet etc. should be encouraged.
- Foods like meat, pickles, coffee, bread, fats, bakery sweets etc. should be avoided. Homoeopathic Remedies like ARSENICUM ALBUM, CALCAREA PHOS, CARBO VEG, HEPAR SULPH, IODUM, NATRUM MUR, PHOSPHORUS, SULPHUR, ZINCUM MET etc. comes closer to this morbid constitution.
- Carbo-nitrogenoid constitution closely resembles Dr. Hahnemann's PSORIC constitution

## 2.OXYGENOID CONSTITUTION

This type of constitution is caused by an excess of oxygen in the bodily tissues.

### PATHOPHYSIOLOGY

The excess of oxygen exaggerates the breakdown of hydrocarbons, nitrogenoid substances and albumin compounds in tissues and bones.

This rapid and incomplete breakdown disturbs the process of assimilation and growth.

The cells cannot retain the necessary constituents. This causes demineralisation.



This leads to destruction of tissues and bones.

Diminished resistance to toxins and poisons.

### **PHYSICAL FEATURES**

•Body- Lean, thin, cachectic (weak and waste) and prone to ulcerations and self-destruction.

•They are scrofulous (enlarged glands and lymphnodes),

•rickety, anaemic and plethoric (excess of bodily fluids).

• Hands-Fusiform with elegant, round fingers.

• Nails-Beautiful, mostly long, sometimes numerous white spots on them.

### **CLINICAL FEATURES**

• Nervous individuals with increased mental and physical activities.

•They are having vigorous appetite, even during illness.

•Patient feels better after rest and having foods.

• They feel strong animal heat after meals and feeble in the empty stomach.

### **MODALITIES**

Aggravation by:

Seashore (low altitude), empty stomach, change of weather, by cold, before and during storm, foggy weather, moving from dry to damp atmosphere.

Amelioration by:

By taking food, by rest, in rains, cold weather, snowfall etc.

### **DIETETIC MANAGEMENT**

• Foods like coffee, cold drinks, fatty food, pickles, weets, meat etc. should be avoided.

• Foods like cows milk , Fresh butter , Sprouts , beans , wheat , jaggary , spinach should be encouraged.

➤ The Homoeopathic medicines like KALI IOD, KREOSOTUM, MERCURY, PETROLEUM etc. comes closer to this morbid state.

- Oxygenoid constitution is closely resembles to Dr. Hahnemann's "SYPHILITIC" constitution.

### **3.HYDROGENOID CONSTITUTION**

This type of constitution is caused by an excess of hydrogen which leads to retention of water in blood and tissues.



### **PATHOPHYSIOLOGY**

More sodium ions are reabsorbed by the cell membranes and hydrogen ions are expelled .

These hydrogen ions get combined with bicarbonate ions and form carbonic acid.

If This condition persists , Blood becomes acidic

### **PHYSICAL FEATURES**

- Body- Obese , round , shortlimbed and swollen
- Skin - Clammy (wet from sweating)
- Hands-Oedematous , Cold and Humid

### **CLINICAL FEATURES**

- Slow intake of Nutrients
- Puffiness and retention of water in the bodily tissues.
- Symptoms get aggravated by everything which can increase the water molecules in the body. Example- bathing, eating seafood etc.
- The symptoms show periodicity and paroxysmal course.
- Patient is easily prone to oedema and anasarca (general swelling).
- Impaired renal functions.
- Complains having benign types of tissue growth.



- Patient is indolent (slothful), apathetic (indifferent, lack of concern), fatigued and slow.
- Patient looks like having no life.
- Nervous affections aggravated by electric disturbances.

## **MODALITIES**

Aggravation by:

Bathing, eating sea food, eating the vegetables which grow near the water or having high content of water, cold and damp weather, rain etc.

Everything which decreases the alkalinity and increases the acidity in the body.

Amelioration by:

Open Air, Warmth , Movement ,Exposure to Dry Atmosphere

## **DIETETIC MANAGEMENT**

- Foods like seafood, wine watery fruits, vegetables, cold drinks, meat should be avoided.
- Foods like nuts, beans, wheat, rice, sprouts, seasonal fruits etc should be encouraged

❖ The Homoeopathic medicines like NATRUM SULPH, THUJA , PULSATILLA etc. comes closer to this morbid state.

❖ HYDROGENOID constitution is closely resembles to Dr. Hahnemann's "SYCOTIC" constitution. However not all sycotic remedies are Hydrogenoid type

## **ROLE OF CONSTITUTION IN HOMEOPATHY**

❖ Diagnosis of constitution helps to understand the peculiarity of an individual in both healthy and diseased state.

❖ This also helps to form the individualistic totality of a patient.

❖ The first instruction on homoeopathic case taking is for the homoeopath to record all the significant points of the complete case history, the potential causations including miasms, as well as the accessory circumstances. The ascertainable physical constitution is one of the very important factor among the accessory circumstances. This information forms the basis of understanding the patient (nature-inheritance) as well as the environmental conditioning factors that affect the development of symptoms (nature-situation) as per Organon §5

❖ In the Chronic Diseases again Hahnemann speaks about how Psora can produce so many different signs and symptoms in different individuals. He points out that the individualizing factor is the bodily constitution, psychology, and hereditary dispositions as well as the mode of living, environment, etc. Hahnemann includes both inheritance (nature) and environment (nurture) in his pathological theory. He said "These are varied according to the difference in the bodily constitution of a man, his hereditary disposition, the various errors in his education and habits, his manner of living and diet, his employments, his turn of mind, his morality, etc.

❖ In selection of potency: The susceptibility of the patient is one of the very important factors of selection of potency. As the susceptibility is modified by constitution and temperaments, the potency selection is to some extent depends on it.

❖ The higher potencies are best adapted to sensitive persons of the nervous, sanguine or choleric temperament; to intelligent, intellectual persons, quick to act and react; to zealous and impulsive persons.

❖ Lower potencies and larger and more frequent doses correspond better to torpid and phlegmatic individuals, dull odd comprehension and slow to act; to coarse fibered, sluggish individuals of gross habits; to those who possess great muscular power but who require a powerful stimulus to excite them. Such persons can take with seeming impunity large amounts of stimulants like whiskey, and show little effect from it.

❖ The morbid influences that are attracted to temperamental tendencies are amenable to treatment and can be removed by the homoeopathic remedy; this in itself is greatly preventive of the dangers arising from temperamental weakness.

❖ Constitutional diagnosis:

It is necessary to assess the peculiarities of an individual during his or her healthy state. The peculiarities of each individual are put together and assessed in three ways. These are as follows -actual constitutional diagnosis, developmental constitutional diagnosis and environmental constitutional diagnosis.

The actual constitutional diagnosis is done by observing the peculiarities of the individual during his healthy state, to be compared with the pathologic state. Only then, "the physician clearly perceives what is to be cured in disease, that is to say, in every individual case of disease." As per §3

The developmental constitutional diagnosis is done by examining and finding out the various etiological factors; it is done by the guideline of Hahnemann in §5 of organon of medicine.

The environmental constitutional diagnosis is nothing but the assessment of the modalities, or the individual's characteristic conditions. That is... how does this person react to his environment, as to time, place and circumstances

❖ Selection of appropriate constitutional medicine is necessary as it corrects the constitutional defects, inherent and acquired. A constitutional medicine acts best only after other miasmatic effects are removed or brought to latent state.

❖ It is believed that applying the right constitutional medicine can be able to correct the inherent and acquired defects of the patient.

❖ In homeopathy, a unique constitutional medicine is prescribed to each individual patient (after diagnosing the constitution).

❖ A well selected and deep acting potentised homeopathic constitutional remedy can be the best remedy for a stable recovery

**Conclusion :** A real evidence of disease condition is the deviation from the normal state of health . These deviations are manifested in mind, body and spirit – the sum total of which provides a sound basis for prescription . In homeopathy, the choice of remedy is based on a consideration of the totality of an individual's symptoms and circumstances. The best-suited medicine is prescribed by Homeopathic Doctor based upon a person's constitution. Homeopathic constitutional classification reaffirms the value of the totality and deep remedy essence & enables more precise prescribing.

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