SO YOU HAVE A COLD-- IS IT ALLERGY, ASTHMA, INFLUENZA, INFECTIOUS, OR NUTRITIONAL IMBALANCE?

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Abstract:

In this brief paper we categorize some simple diagnostic methods for analysis of patients who present with rhinitis, sinusitis, itchy, runny eyes; asthma, fever, chills-- in other words, cold symptoms. Cold symptoms can come from a variety of reasons, not just from viral infection. However, viral infection will be thoroughly discussed in this paper.

In this article we will discuss simple OTC (over-the-counter) treatment regimes which can be used for cold-like symptoms. This is vital information for pharmacists and practitioners alike in dealing with probably the most common ailment known to man.
Introduction:

The common cold goes by many names. Some of these include "cold", "coryza", "upper respiratory infection", "acute rhinitis", "infectious rhinitis", "catarrh", "hay fever", "tonsillitis", "flu", "sore throat", "laryngitis", "pharyngitis", "otitis", "otitis media", and a host of other names and diagnostic criteria that reveal the nature of the cold.

Pharmacists are likely to intervene in the case of the patient who presents these symptoms, as some patients don't visit their doctors with "cold-like" symptoms. They will ask pharmacists about treatment, or other therapists who dispense over-the-counter medications. The result of this kind of visit with the OTC therapist is mostly likely advice regarding self-medication, or home remedies combined with OTC prescriptions. Or the inquirer may be pointed to a general practitioner.

Many pharmacists and other OTC practitioners do not have a proper understanding of homeopathic treatments, and therefore they do not recommend adequate homeopathic treatment for simple conditions like cold, flu, or any of the symptoms mentioned earlier. It is the purpose of this article to explain to pharmacists and other over-the-counter therapists how to more correctly ascertain what type of OTC therapy might be in order, and also when to refer a patient to a general practitioner for more specific diagnosis and treatment.

Background:

An extensive cold surveillance study was performed in 1992, at the Vicks Research Center in the United States [1]. The study was designed to characterize symptoms in the nasal patency profiles of subjects reporting upper respiratory disturbances. Patients who were suffering from the common cold and not using any form of therapy were included in the study.

The subjects were asked to assess their symptoms, questioned about recent medications, tested for subjective nasal congestion and nasal flow, and subjected to nasal lavage and throat swabs as well as viral cultures. This was continued over a four-year period ending in 1992.

Two hundred twenty-six cold episodes were evaluated in one hundred four individuals. For the presenting cases, the virus swab was analyzed to determine the type of virus. In seventy-two percent of the cases no virus was ascertained. This would indicate that many cold and flu conditions ensue without the presence of a known virus. In working with cold and flu symptoms it is important to recognize when viruses may or may not be involved.

In a British study on self medication published in 1987 [2], it was revealed that non-prescription OTC treatment is applied to one in four adult illnesses, and to one in three child illnesses. Thus it is important for any practitioner using OTC products to have some basic knowledge about the nature of colds and flus, as these are the major disturbances involving over-the-counter use.

Diagnosing the Common Cold:
To diagnose the common cold, we must note the four basic cold symptoms. These four symptoms are: cough, nasal congestion, runny nose (rhinorrhoea), and sore throat. Additional symptoms may include fever, difficulty in breathing, headache, body ache, chills, disturbances in digestion, and an overall feeling of malaise and fatigue. Other symptoms may also be present.

**Cold Symptoms**

1. Cough
2. Nasal congestion
3. Runny nose
4. Sore throat

Cold and flu symptoms usually occur between the months of October and March, as this is the time when viruses are most often passing between people, who spend more time in confined areas and are subjected to colder weather. Between the months of March and October, allergy cases are more prevalent; there are many pollen allergies. Dust allergies can be seen throughout the entire year.

Of our four basic symptoms of the common cold, the most bothersome are the cough and nasal congestion. The condition of the cough is usually of short duration, and the majority of cases are uncomplicated. The pharmacist should inquire specifically about the productiveness or unproductiveness of the cough. If it is productive, then the pharmacist should ascertain whether the mucous is purulent. If it is purulent, and has an extreme yellow, green or red color with a heavy odor, this is an indication to refer the patient to a doctor. If the mucous is not purulent, and the patient has no preexisting medical history (such as diabetes, heart disease, chronic bronchitis or the like), then an OTC remedy is appropriate.

If there is green color, this may reveal staphylococcus, whereas a yellow color may involve other types of bacteria. A red color usually comes from minute bleeding in the lung tissues or rhinopharynx, or could occur as slight bleeding resulting from pneumonia. These must be referred to a proper medical practitioner.

For relief of a persistent dry cough, the New Vistas Cough Syrup is an excellent formula that is not a depressant, and does not produce sedation. Thus it is safe when taking this product to drive or operate machinery. This is a safe, natural formula with homeopathic action to help the patient deal with dry cough. This product does not cause the constipation often seen with most codeine-containing cough syrups.

In relieving the nasal congestion, some topical sympathomimetics, such as oxymetazoline, can have immediate and easing effects. If the runny nose also produces purulent, odorous material, this also may be a condition for the care of a medical practitioner for treatment.

In the case of sore throat, the condition that usually determines the quality of the sore throat is that of the intensity of pain. A minor nagging, itchy, burning sore throat is obviously not as bad as a severely painful one. A sore throat that produces such severe pain that the patient cannot work, produces tears, or cannot sleep because of the pain, is one that warrants referral to a doctor or proper practitioner. However, if the sore throat pain is merely uncomfortable, aggravated by swallowing, etc., then the OTC
practitioner could prescribe a throat lozenge. The menthol type is found to be very soothing. The Adrenal Liquescence and the Anti-Inflammation can also have powerful effects as OTC remedies to relieve the sore throat.

The Intestinal Formula I is for intestinal type flu symptoms in which stomach upset is present, along with cough and other cold and flu symptoms. Often there is extreme nausea and vomiting. The Intestinal Formula I should be taken in six drops every fifteen minutes, until the intestinal symptoms abate.

The Influenza Formula 2 is one for inhalant or respiratory influenza infections, and should be taken in six drops every fifteen minutes until the respiratory condition begins to abate.

**Allergy:**

In the case of allergic reactions, we usually see the primary symptoms of sneezing, runny nose, itchy eyes and nasal congestion. We usually do not see cough or sore throat symptoms in allergy-related conditions. This allergic rhinitis is an inflammation of the mucous membranes in the lining of the nose. This is due to allergy and a hyper-immune reaction to pollen, dust, and other airborne substances. Symptoms include nasal congestion, rhinorrhoea, sneezing, and itchy eyes. This is a seasonal complaint by most patients, unless the allergin is in constant contact with the patient. Examples of this are dogs, cats, house dust, or even human skin. Treatment of the symptoms can include Adrenal Liquescence, 500 mg. Pantothentic Acid, 50 mg. B6, 50 mg. Magnesium, as well as 100 mg. calcium. An extra dose of vitamin C is helpful. Opsin I is an excellent OTC remedy for food allergies, and Opsin II for inhalant allergies.

**Allergy Symptoms**

1. Nasal Congestions
2. Rhinorrhoea
3. Sneezing
4. Itchy eyes
5. Asthmatic breathing

A useful guide for understanding the diagnosis of hay fever is that fever and severe headache are not present in hay fever or allergy-type reactions. If headache and fever are present, then an infective condition might be the cause.

If there is chronic asthma, this can be a dangerous situation that might warrant referral to a practitioner. If any blockage of air passages is present, this may also warrant referral to a practitioner.

The most important symptoms of asthma are wheeziness of respiration, cough, shortness of breath, sensations of chest tightness and constriction, and exertional dyspnoea, or cough. Most mild asthma cases can be treated successfully with OTC products, as well as the Asthma product from New Vistas. Basic antihistamines can also be helpful in these cases. If the condition is in any way threatening, then the patient must be referred to a general practitioner.
Influenza:

In influenza there is a systemic symptom of fever/headache malaise, and respiratory symptoms of dry cough and runny nose. Thus influenza is a viral infection, in which viruses penetrate the cell wall through lack of fatty acids, lack of calcium and lack of proper immune system defense. Then these viruses use the DNA of the cell to replicate, and thereby multiply their numbers. They start to produce swelling of the tissues, which produces influenza of either the respiratory or intestinal type. This irritation of tissues then produces a wide variety of disturbances that might include diarrhea, vomiting, rhinitis, choriza, or a host of other problems.

**Influenza Symptoms**

1. Fever/Headache malaise
2. Respiratory symptoms
3. Dry cough
4. Runny nose

The usual onset of the flu is three days for incubation as the disease builds, three days of "term" (enduring the influenza), and then three days of recovery. These nine days are usually unreachable, but can be alleviated to some degree by various OTC products. VIR from New Vistas is a product that can help to prevent the flu. Early treatment of the flu can be aided by avoiding animal protein, taking 1000 mg. of vitamin C every two hours until a bowel flush ensues, massaging the body with lemon, taking a hot bath, bundling up, and going to bed. This acid flux of the body helps the immune system to deal with the viral disease.

It should be pointed out that these and other home remedies for influenza and colds work best in the very early stages of the disease in question, as once full-blown onset ensues, the situation usually will run its full course.

A fever with a temperature of 105° is crucial and critical. At 106° there may be neurological destruction. It is thought that 103° is the point at which medical intervention might be in order. Low-grade fevers below 103° are often best treated with simple good care, comfort, avoidance of animal protein, as well as drinking extra fluids and non-exposure to cold.

Cough:

Cough symptoms experienced by the elderly may be an indication of a more serious disorder. If a chronic cough is not treatable by OTC remedies, the patient should be referred to a general practitioner. Aspects of the timing of the cough may also be useful clues for diagnosis. A cough that awakens the individual late at night (particularly a child) is suggestive of asthma. Cough accompanied by expectoration on rising in the morning is characteristic of chronic bronchitis. It is sometimes thought of as asthma, but it is bronchitis. This is usually associated with smokers.
Changes in posture also may set off coughing. Free expectoration of sputum is common in patients with bronchiectasis. A dry cough which persists over many weeks may signify a neoplasm. Any cough lasting longer than ten days should be handled by a doctor.

Coughs that present in the afternoon between 3:00 and 6:00 may be indicative of a calcium deficiency. Coughs presenting in the morning are usually indicative of potassium deficiency. Other possible causes of cold and flu symptoms are nutritional and metabolic imbalances. As we have just discussed, the presence of vitamin C, potassium and calcium deficiencies can be more of a cause of susceptibility to illness than most practitioners are willing to accept.

Another powerful factor in treating colds and flus is stress reduction. It is known that deep muscle stress reduction for more than twenty minutes at a time increases the blood flow and enhances the immune system by decreasing the sympathetic nerves and increasing the parasympathetic nerves. This gives a strong push to the immune system. This helps in the treatment of any type of cold, flu or allergy, as it has an overall stabilizing effect. Any OTC practitioner must recognize the beneficial capacities of stress reduction, and recommend some type of stress reduction to the patient who is suffering cold or flu symptoms. Emotional and physical stress should be avoided if possible until the cold or flu begins to abate. The earlier this is done, the better the results will be.

Complex Multiple Problems:

Another factor we must address in dealing with cold or flu symptoms is the fact that there may be an interplay among allergy and influenza, nutritional balance, and other issues that we have pointed out in this article. It is wrong to be so reductionistic as to look for one primary involvement, as there may actually be many aspects of the illness. Multiple involvement may indicate, for example, how allergies can actually increase inflammation in the nasal mucosa, which can contribute to proliferating viruses and other types of diseases. Nutritional deficiencies or excesses can set up the tendency towards other types of diseases. So we don't want to be reductionistic in pursuing these diseases, but examine the overall factors of the body and encourage good nutrition, exercise, stress reduction, healthy lifestyle, as well as OTC treatment in the beginning stages of the disease. If the patient is stubborn, look for the key factors which may point to referral to a medical doctor.

**Nutritional Deficiencies that Aggravate or Cause a Cold:**

1. Vitamin C  
2. Vitamin A  
3. Vitamin E  
4. Mineral Imbalance  
5. Fatty acids  
6. Amino acids  
7. B vitamins

Often, an allergy-provoked or -aggravated cold is one that lasts a longer period of time than one that is not; it goes beyond the nine days (as we have described above)
into two weeks, or sometimes even a month. This unshakable kind of cold is a clear sign that there is an allergy aggravating the situation, causing a drop in resistance, and also creating an inability of the body to properly deal with the viral intruder. In this case, allergy compounds must be isolated and removed from the patient's environment, or desensitization therapy must be pursued. Stress reduction will also go a long way towards aiding allergies as well as viral conditions.

As pharmacists we must realize some of the key factors that have been outlined in this study. We must work with the medical establishment through referrals, and recommend that the patient establish contact with a good medical doctor if he or she is not visiting one already. Establishing a good connection with a doctor when one is healthy is also highly important, as the doctor is better able to assist the patient when he or she is sick.

To help with this, we also have the Personal Medical History book [in progress], which helps the patient to document all the medical aspects of his life and to share them with the doctor. This establishes a good patient-doctor relationship. The patient should be mindful when establishing a relationship that he finds a doctor who is agreeable to a natural lifestyle, and also the use of natural pharmaceuticals and homeopathics. This is highly important, as most allopathic, synthetic compounds are aggravating to the human condition, and contribute to the disease picture in the long run. Finding a doctor who is amenable to this condition is very helpful to the patient and the pharmacist. If the doctor involved is not amenable to this condition, then perhaps he needs to see more research, which can be supplied by the Hippocampus Research Facility. If the doctor is not open to looking at new research, then the patient should consider finding a different doctor.

**Immuno-Suppression:**

The effects of white sugar on immune suppression are well documented; white sugar also leads to outbreaks of cold and flu. It is not merely coincidental that we see the most dramatic outbreaks of these colds and flus two weeks after one of our "sugar holidays", such as Valentine's Day or Halloween, where sugar use is rampant. The immune suppression effect is extreme. By using excessive allopathic cover-up of symptoms, we actually create disturbances later on. In homeopathy we seek not to cover up symptoms with an OTC remedy, but to actually recognize and deal with some of the deeper qualities of the disease.

With any type of blockage or swelling of the mucous membrane, such as in asthma or runny nose, it is also noted that exercise is an excellent way to increase dilation and decrease constriction, aiding deeper breathing. There is usually a seventy percent improvement in oxygenation if the exercise can be sustained for more than twenty minutes. Patients should be cautioned, however, that too much exercise may produce in them a state of hypoxia. This could happen if they do too much too soon, and put themselves into a state of jeopardy. Thus light exercise can be very helpful in stimulating the system to diminish constriction and increase air flow.

In dealing with OTC recommendations, it is highly advised to explore how much white sugar has been consumed, as well as whether the individual consumes enough
fruit and vegetables. Deficiencies in many types of calcium and potassium can be very complicating in this situation.

**Endotoxins:**

Research on endotoxins has reinforced the homeopathy hypothesis. Many of these endotoxins have nonspecific stimulations on the entire immune system. So much iatrogenic disturbance has been caused by using antibiotics in viral conditions, but with homeopathy's nonspecific immune stimulation effects, none of this damage can occur.

**Discussion:**

With more and more homeopathic remedies appearing on the pharmacy shelves, the modern pharmacist must know more. This article is to educate on simple cold and flu treatment to know more about homeopathy. Continuing education can be attained from the College of Practical Homeopathy in London, England. Home study classes are available over the Internet at: HTTP://USA.NET/~QMED.
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--- BIBLIOGRAPHY ---

BOOKS


ARTICLES AND STUDIES