

Role of Liv.52 and Geriforte as General Metabolic Tonics in Drug Addicts

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ABSTRACT

Drug dependence has become a major social and health problem in most countries. Apart from the specific harmful effects of drug abuse, it produces adverse effects on the psychological and physiological functions. The present study evaluated the effects of treatment with Liv.52 and Geriforte in subjects who became dependent on various addictive substances: tobacco, alcohol, opium and drugs.

There was overall improvement in all the symptoms except occasional restlessness in chronic smokers, of whom 3 out of 35 gave up smoking. There was 95% relief in smokers' cough in 3 cases.

Forty eight cases of alcohol dependence had similar general symptoms; 6 had palpable liver, loss of appetite and oedema in the feet. All subjects recovered well in spite of continued alcohol consumption though some reported reduced intake.

Opium and other narcotic addicts showed some improvement but depression was not affected.

The beneficial effects of Geriforte and Liv.52 on various drug addicts were evident from this study. Geriforte being a metabolic tonic and revitaliser, reduced fatiguability and increased the ability to withstand stress, while Liv.52, a liver tonic, improved the functioning of the liver.

INTRODUCTION

The past decade has seen an enormous upsurge in the use of various types of drugs and several other kinds of addictions. Such an increase in the intake of drugs presents a serious public health problem.

The kaleidoscope of abused drugs is brimming with many new entries every day and there is increasing evidence of a polydrug abuse, which involves the use of several drugs concurrently.

Drug abuse produces many adverse effects on the psychological and physiological functions. The most prevalent type of medical disorder is often associated with the route of drug administration. For example, tobacco smoking is associated with compromised pulmonary functions. Intravenous use of diazepam and opioids enhances the risk of a variety of infectious diseases ranging from viral hepatitis to acquired immunodeficiency disorders. Alcohol abuse is associated with liver disease, gall bladder and pancreatic disease, and gastric and cardiovascular disorders. Alcoholic cardiomyopathy is the commonest cause of heart failure. Alcohol and opioids, each may have profound adverse effects on the reproductive function in both men and women.

The diversity of drug abusers and the ever changing array of abused drugs and drug combinations present may obstacles to a search for simple antidotes.

It was, therefore, decided to evaluate the effects of treatment with Liv.52 and Geriforte, two proprietary remedies of The Himalaya Drug Co., in those subjects who became dependent on various addictive substances.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

One hundred cases between 20-70 years of age were selected for this study. They were classified according to their type of addiction:

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| 1. | Cigarette smoking | - | 35 cases |
| 2. | Alcohol | - | 48 cases |
| 3. | Opium | - | 10 cases |
| 4. | Other drugs (Dextropropoxyphene, carisoprodol, diazepam, promethazine) | - | 7 cases |

The assessment was based on clinical observations like fatigue, concentration, general feeling, depression, vague bodyaches, loss of sleep, memory, appetite and irritability.

Biochemical investigations like L.F.T., blood urea, blood sugar, serum bilirubin, serum cholesterol, SGOT and SGPT were carried out in selected cases. In some cases, e.g. chronic smokers (smoking 20 cigarettes daily for 20 years), X-ray chest and ECG were done to rule out any pathology.

After the preliminary studies and investigations, Geriforte and Liv.52 tablets were prescribed in the dose of 2 tablets, t.i.d. of each for two months and then 1 tablet t.i.d. of each for the next three months.

All other drugs were discontinued and the patients were evaluated at two monthly intervals by repeating the clinical observations and biochemical parameters. Patients having tuberculosis, diabetes, jaundice and chronic bronchial asthma were excluded from the study.

RESULTS

a) Three out of 35 chronic smokers gave up smoking completely. There was overall improvement in all the symptoms except occasional restlessness. Eleven subjects reduced smoking by more than 30% and there was improvement in several clinical observations. The remaining twenty one cases persisted with their smoking habits but even in these cases symptoms like fatigue, lack of concentration, insomnia and palpitations either disappeared or were considerably reduced. There was 95% relief in smokers' cough in 3 cases, and one case of Burger's disease showed marked improvement after five months with complete relief from pain and ulcer.

Serum cholesterol which was high in 5% of obese cases showed a significant fall at the end of 6 months. Irritability persisted in some patients. This probably is the basic personality defect, which makes them take to smoking in the first place.

b) Forty eight cases of alcohol dependence had similar general symptoms like anorexia, depression and loss of sexual functions. Six cases had enlarged palpable liver, oedema in the feet and marked anorexia. All subjects recovered in spite of continued alcohol consumption. Liver was palpable but regressed considerably in three cases. The amount of alcohol consumption was also reduced in some cases.

- c) The subjects' dependant on opium and other narcotics showed some improvement but depression was not affected. No adverse reactions were seen.

DISCUSSION

Clinical studies of illicit drugs of abuse have always been limited by constraints associated with the reliability of information provided by the strict drug user and the illegality of drug abuse behaviour.

Despite intensive antismoking campaigns orchestrated by the government, tobacco smoking remains one of the most prevalent forms of drug abuse in this country.

In our country, alcohol abuse and alcoholism are increasingly becoming a visible problem, rivalled only by heart disease and cancer.

The diversity of drugs and drug abusers, the social stigma and lack of proper medical care and rehabilitation, facilitate the penetration of the curse of addiction into the deeper strata of human society. That Geriforte and Liv.52 have some beneficial effects on such addicted patients is evident from the above study. Geriforte is a general metabolic tonic and revitaliser (Rasayan). It reduces fatiguability, increases ability to withstand stress (Kulkarni, R.D. and Khandeparkar, U.K., 1981) and improves concentration and memory (Virudhagirinathan, B.S. and Velmurugendran, C.U., 1982). Liv.52 is a liver tonic and improves liver function (Indira Bai, K., *et al.*, 1970). Further, Liv.52 protects the liver against alcohol and other hepatotoxins (Kulkarni, R.D. and Mujumdar, S.M., 1977). It also affords protection against carbon tetrachloride-induced hepatic damage (Singh, N. *et al.*, 1978).

These effects were clearly seen in the present study: they were particularly striking among alcoholics with liver enlargement. The effects of these two remedies on smokers were also very encouraging. The toning up of psychological functions and liver metabolism appears to be useful in improving and maintaining health in patients addicted to any of these harmful agents.

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