



## Effective Homeopathic Cure of Patient with Somatoform Disorder

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### Abstract

Somatoform disorder is defined according to (DSM-IV-TR) criteria. Disorders in this category include those where the symptoms suggest a medical condition but where no medical condition can be found by a physician. Patients with a somatoform disorder might experience significant pain without a medical or biological cause. Pain disorder is one of the five somatoform disorders and is considered to have a poor prognosis. It often involves other symptoms such as depression, anxiety and drug abuse.

**What is somatoform:** When physical symptoms are caused by mental or emotional factors it is called somatisation. For example, many people have occasional headaches caused by mental stress. But, stress and other mental health problems can cause many other physical symptoms. For example: chest pains, tiredness, dizziness, back pain, feeling sick, etc.

(The term psychosomatic disorder means something similar to somatisation, but includes other things).

**How can the mind cause physical symptoms:** The relationship between the mind and body is complex and not fully understood. When we somatise, somehow the mental or emotional problem is expressed partly, or mainly, as one or more physical symptoms. However, the symptoms are real and are not imagined. You feel the pain, have the diarrhoea, etc.

**Who gets somatoform disorders and what causes them:** Somatoform disorders can affect anyone of any age. The exact number of people affected is difficult to determine as many cases are probably not diagnosed. Somatisation disorder is thought to be quite rare, perhaps affecting about 1 in 1,000 people. Hypochondriasis and body dysmorphic disorder are perhaps more common.

It is not clear why some people develop somatoform disorders. Genetic and environmental factors both probably play a part. That is, one's genetic make-up combined with factors such as how you were brought up, your parental and peer influences, etc., may all contribute.

Somatoform disorders are more common in people who abuse alcohol and drugs. However, drugs and alcohol may be factors in both cause and effect. For example, some people may turn to alcohol or other drugs to ease the distress of their somatic symptoms. On the other hand, excess alcohol or illicit drugs may make the symptoms worse.

**What is the treatment for somatoform disorders:** Treatment is often difficult as people with somatoform disorders commonly do not accept that their symptoms are due to mental factors. They may become angry with their doctors who cannot find the cause for their symptoms. Another difficulty is that people with somatoform disorder, like everyone else, will develop physical diseases at some point. So, every new symptom is a challenge to a doctor to know how far to investigate.

Many people who are thought to have a somatoform disorder also have other mental health problems such as depression, anxiety or substance abuse. Treatment of these other mental health problems may improve the situation.

If the person can be convinced that mental (psychological) factors may contribute to, or cause, the physical symptoms then they may accept a talking treatment such as cognitive behavioural therapy. Talking treatments may help people to understand the reasons behind symptoms, aim to change any false beliefs that they may have, and help them to identify and deal with emotional issues.

Medication does not have much of a role except in body dysmorphic disorder. Studies have shown that medicines called Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) can ease symptoms in many people with body dysmorphic disorder. SSRIs are sometimes useful in pain disorder too.

**How common is somatisation:** It is common. Sometimes we can relate the physical symptoms to a recent stress or mental health problem. For example, you may realise that a bout of neck pain or headache is due to stress. Anxiety and depression are also common reasons to develop physical symptoms such as palpitations, aches and pains, etc. Often the physical symptoms go when emotional and mental factors ease. However, often we do not realise the physical symptom is due to a mental factor. We may think we have a physical disease and see a doctor about it.

**Somatisation and functional symptoms:** Some doctors prefer to use the term functional when no known physical cause can be found for a physical symptom. A functional symptom means: a function of the body is faulty (for example, there may be pain or diarrhoea), but we don't know the cause. The cause may be due to mental factors (somatisation), physical factors not yet discovered, or a combination of both. Another term which is sometimes used for such symptoms is medically unexplained symptoms.

**What are the somatoform disorders:** The somatoform disorders are the extreme end of the scale of somatisation. So, the physical symptoms persist long-term, or are severe, but no physical disease can fully explain the symptoms. Somatoform disorders include:

Somatisation disorder; hypochondriasis; conversion disorder; body dysmorphic disorder; pain disorder These are classified as separate mental health disorders as the cause of the symptoms is thought to be mental factors, but they cannot be fully explained by depression, substance abuse, or other recognised mental health disorders.

People with somatoform disorders usually disagree that their symptoms are due to mental factors, and are convinced that the cause of their symptoms is a physical problem.

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**Keywords:** Somatisation disorder; Homeopathic cure; Briquet's syndrome

## Somatisation Disorder

People with this disorder have many physical symptoms from different parts of the body. For example, headaches, feeling sick, abdominal pain, bowel problems, period problems, tiredness, sexual problems, etc. The main symptoms may vary at different times. Affected people tend to be emotional about their symptoms. So they may describe their symptoms as 'terrible', 'unbearable', etc., and symptoms can greatly affect day-to-day life. The disorder persists for long-term although the symptoms may wax and wane in severity. The cause or etiology is sometimes unknown. It may have something to do with an unconscious desire for help, attention or care. It runs in some families. The disorder usually first develops between the ages of 18 and 30. Women are affected more than men.

It is difficult for a doctor to diagnose somatisation disorder. This is because it is difficult to be sure that there is no physical cause for the symptoms. So, people with this disorder tend to be referred to various specialists, have many tests and investigations, but no physical disease is found to account for the symptoms. The patient in this article firstly refers to a cardiologist because of cardiac symptoms and he finds no cardiac symptoms, the specialist refers the patient to a psychiatrist afterward. He orders MRI to rule out physical origin of severe headache in the patient.

MRI was within normal range and no space occupying lesion was seen in the multiple images. He makes a psychiatric diagnosis of somatoform disorder with deep emotional origin because all previous para-clinical assessments are negative. Thus he gets some medicines like analgesics that have no therapeutic effects on him. He is then referred to the author who does a thorough interview with him and uncovers the main hidden causes of his severe physical symptoms and starts his treatment, afterward.

## Literature and Homeopathic Cure of Patients with Somatoform Disorders

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In her article she explains the disorder in detail and describes how homeopathy can cure the affected patients:

"My article on Somatoform disorder was published earlier in 2010. I am repeating this article again to help my readers understand the difference between Somatoform disorder and my last month's article on factitious disorder. Both are psychosomatic disorders, but in Factitious disorder, the patient is faking the illness, while, in Somatoform disorder the patient actually feels the symptoms, but with no diagnosis.

Our mind and body team up to influence health, and Somatoform disorder is one such expression of this collaboration. This is a psychosomatic disorder, also known as Hysteria or Briquet's syndrome, pain disorder or body Dysmorphic disorder where a patient suffers physical symptoms with no specific physiological cause. In Somatoform disorder, the symptoms are so intense that it can weaken a person's potential to function. The patient is convinced that they are sick, but

with no identifiable diagnosis. When no physical cause or underlying illness is determined on medical examination and lab results, then the ailment undoubtedly is a result of concealed emotions such as stress, anger, anxiety, constant worry, depression, guilt, etc., hence, classifying it as a psychosomatic disorder. Sometimes, physical symptoms are not deliberately generated by the patient, but are an allegory for their emotional problems. Somatoform disorder can stimulate emotional agony, thus, impacting social and occupational performance. These patients occasionally can be misdiagnosed with having a medical condition and can suffer iatrogenic complications from medications and invasive diagnostic procedures.

## Types of Somatoform Disorder

- **Somatization disorder:** In this disorder a person suffers physical symptoms with no medical origin.
- **Pain disorder.** In this malady, a person puts up with generalized or localized severe aches and pains not relieved by analgesics, because of emotional turbulence.
- **Conversion disorder:** The identifiable cause of this condition is stress, and patient undergoes impaired mobility due to an unexpected loss of voluntary, motor or sensory functions.
- **Hypochondriasis:** This syndrome occurs in any age group, and is triggered by nervous tension, lack of assurance and fear of contracting a particular disease also called disease phobia.
- **Body dysmorphic disorder:** In this ailment, patients envision imperfections in their body and undertake fruitless attempts to rectify their appearance through cosmetic surgery.

## Causes of Somatoform Disorder

- Unknown
- Tension in the family
- Insecurity
- Suppressed emotions
- Parental modeling of Somatoform disorder
- Alcohol and drug abuse or withdrawal
- Sexual abuse

## Symptoms of Somatoform Disorder

- Headaches, bodily aches and pains
- Loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, indigestion.
- Breathlessness
- Fatigue, dizziness
- Seizures
- Menstrual irregularities
- Sexual symptoms
- Depression, behavior problems, panic disorder, anxiety disorder, hallucinations
- Inability to walk, move
- Paralysis

- Disorganized speech or becoming mute
- Suicidal attempts

## Homeopathic Approach to Somatoform Disorder

When a person is stumbling upon oodles of stress and is unable to cope with that stress, then they start experiencing physical symptoms. Homeopathy appreciates the psychological source of somatic symptoms. Homeopathic remedies function at the level of mind and body collectively, thus eradicating the disease. Unlike Homeopathy, Conventional medicines do not have any precise treatment for Somatoform disorders, other than Analgesics, Non steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, Antidepressants or sleep medication. The detailed history taking in Homeopathy gives the patient an opportunity and time to talk about their emotions, which provides them an insight into themselves and helps them comprehend their illness better. Homeopathic constitutional approach will allow the patient to release their stress, by specifically acting to alleviate emotional commotion such as excessive anxiety, irritability, insecurity, obsessive traits, undue jealousy, suspicion, fears, depression, neurosis etc. By relieving the above emotions, Homeopathic remedies will alleviate all physical symptoms bringing on harmonious state of health. No other system of medicine has such an outstanding approach of managing the mind-body syndrome with well defined, natural and safe therapeutic agents.

Some Homeopathic remedies that are commonly used in the treatment of Somatoform disorder are given below. These are just a few of the commonly used Homeopathic remedies and are mentioned only to create awareness about the effectiveness of Homeopathic medicines in Somatoform disorder. It is not advisable to resort to self-medication for any disease.

### Homeopathic remedies for Somatoform disorder

**Arnica:** This is a brilliant remedy for Somatoform disorder, when a person is subjected to physical symptoms consequential to emotional trauma. The body is tender to touch and feels extremely sensitive, sore, lame, bruised, and stiff. Patient complains of vertigo and ringing in ears. These patients are apathetic and are unable to perform continuous active work. They have an immense fear of being touched or approached. They may pass involuntary stool while sleeping.

**Cimicifuga Racemosa:** This remedy works on the cerebrospinal and muscular system, particularly in patients who are tense and restless with pain. Pains are muscular, crampy and like electric shocks. These patients feel unhappy, confused and dream of forthcoming evil. They complain of nausea and vomiting from feeling of pressure on spine and cervical region.

**Ignatia Amara:** This is a foremost remedy for Hysteria, mainly in women. The patient has a tendency to clonic spasms with marked hyperesthesia of all senses. They are sensitive, easily excited and quick to perceive. They go through a rapid change of mental and physical condition opposite to each other. Their physical symptoms are mainly a result of grief and worry. Congestive headaches feel as if a nail were driven through the side. These patients have an inclination to choke. They get ulcerative pain in soles with jerking of limbs.

**Kalmia Latifolia:** This is a meticulous remedy for Somatoform pain disorder. The patient complains of severe shooting pain with stiffness, numbness or cold sensation in the muscles that affects a large part of a limb. Pains come suddenly, shift suddenly, get worse from motion, at night and from leaning forwards. Their brain feels confused with impairment of vision. Facial pains are worse mainly on the right side.

There is a warm sensation in the stomach with nausea and vomiting. In women there are menstrual irregularities with palpitation.

**Phytolacca:** This is another remarkable remedy for Somatoform disorder when the patient is restless with aches, discomfort and prostration. The muscles feel extremely stiff and sore with exhaustion. Pain is shooting, changing spots and is worse from movement, in damp cold weather, at night and feels better by warmth, rest and lying down. The patient loses weight, is indifferent to life with loss of personal charm and disregard of surrounding objects. There is a feeling as if heart leaped into throat, with loss of voice and difficulty breathing. Patient is sensitive to electric changes and rain.

**Ranunculus bulbosus:** This is one more exceptional remedy when the patient complains of shocks throughout the whole body. These patients are receptive to touch, and complain of aches and muscle stiffness of the neck and back. Pain is stabbing with feeling of soreness felt near the spine and shoulder-blades, especially on the left side. Pain is worse after consuming alcoholic beverages. The patient experiences day blindness, mist before eyes as from smoke.

### Self-care measures for Somatoform disorder

- Get at least eight hours of sleep a night
- Eat several small meals during the day to keep a steady supply of protein and carbohydrate for proper muscle function
- Be well hydrated, as water allows for cleansing and free flow in the system
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
- Exercise regularly
- Have good stress management
- Make changes at work
- Pace yourself
- Take hot baths or showers to soothe soreness, increase circulation, and relieve stiffness
- Cut back on caffeine, alcohol, and sugar

Hence every individual suffering from Somatoform disorder may consider Homeopathy to provide relief and lifetime cure. Homeopathic treatment is magical and is able to transform a person's life from a distressful life to a healthy one.

I hope this article gives you an insight and helps you differentiate between factitious disorder and Somatoform disorder, making you more receptive to a family member or friend who might be tormented by one of this psychosomatic disorder (Website: [www.homeopathic-cure.com](http://www.homeopathic-cure.com)).

### Case Analysis

A married man, A.G., aged 46 was visited by the author with chief complaint of moderate to severe headache, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of September 2010. The problem had started 20 months before, in March 2009, following an emotional and psychological trauma which the patient never dared to discuss in detail. Regarding the prevalence of cardiac disorder in his family and experiencing chest pain, he was visited by a cardiologist who found no organic cause and thus psychological origin was diagnosed. Mr. A.G. was visited by a psychiatrist, afterwards. Brain CT scanning was reported normal. He began to experience the headache afterwards. The pain was first felt in his occipital region and

ameliorated only by hitting the head by his fist and pulling his hair! He also complained of severe revenge feelings against his business partner and fear of killing him. Traveling made him feel better.

### Course of treatment

The patient's rubrics were repertorized by Radar diagnostic software. The main rubrics are as follows:

STOMACH – THIRST

GENERALS – FOOD and DRINKS – cold drink, cold water – desire

MIND – LOQUACITY

DREAMS – FALLING

MIND – FEAR – happen, something will

MIND – ANGER – easily

DREAMS – DOGS

MIND – HATRED – revengeful; hatred and

HEAD – PAIN – Occiput – extending to – Vertex

MIND – FEAR – sleep – go to sleep; fear to

MIND – ANXIETY – future, about

MIND – CONCENTRATION – difficult

MIND – IMPRESSIONABLE

MIND-PULLING-hair-desire to pull her own hair

MIND – ANXIETY – health; about – own health; her/his

MIND – STRIKING – himself – knocking his head against wall and things

MIND – TRAVELLING – desire for

MIND – ANXIETY – health; about – relatives; of

Phosphorus 30 c was ordered as his first prescription. A globule of the remedy was put on his tongue. The patient said he felt better before leaving the clinic.

He was visited after a month on October 12, 2010. He said that he felt much better but still suffered a less severe headache that made him knock his head and pull his hair. Thus Belladonna with potency of 30 c in liquid form was prescribed to be taken every three days after shaking twelve times to potentize the remedy and not to induce aggravation. He was visited for the 3<sup>rd</sup> time on November 14, 2010. His headache had subsided by about 50%. After three months he had no headache and no sense of revenge and hatred, either. After a year his case was followed and no symptoms bothered him. He had re-started his normal life and referred his wife and daughter to be treated with homeopathy as, well. In fact a family therapy with classical homeopathy was done for his family. They all improved remarkably.

### Conclusion

Pain disorder, a somatoform disorder, has been understood as having a poor prognosis in somatoform disorder with long lasting pains. However, the patient was cured completely in less than a year and without recurrence after taking the homeopathic remedies. The patient did not experience any adverse effects due to the remedies. Randomized Clinical Trials (RCT) is suggested to assess the efficacy of homeopathic remedies in a large number of similar cases to help patients with such a common and crippling disorder.