A Tipping Point For Homeopathy?

Tag it: ?

Sunday, 21 February 2010

A landmark paper on homeopathy and cancer has appeared in the February 2010 issue of the *International Journal of Oncology*. Scientists at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center (MDA), led by Moshe Frenkel, MD, have confirmed the ability of four homeopathic remedies to induce apoptosis (programmed cell death) in breast cancer cell lines in the laboratory. The scientists in question were from the Integrative Medicine Program, the Department of Molecular Pathology, and the Department of Melanoma Medical Oncology of MDA. Their two Indian collaborators were from the Banerji Homeopathic Research Foundation, Kolkata, India, where these same remedies are employed clinically with apparent success. The four ultra-dilute remedies in question were Carcinosin, Phytolacca, Conium and Thuja.

"The remedies exerted preferential cytotoxic effects against the two breast cancer cell lines, causing cell cycle delay/arrest and apoptosis" the authors wrote.

It was particularly interesting that the cell-killing effects of two of the remedies investigated in this study, Carcinosin and Phytolacca, appeared similar to the activity of paclitaxel (Taxol), the most commonly used chemotherapeutic drug for breast cancer, when it was tested in the same two adenocarcinoma cell lines investigated in this study.

Phytolacca is better known as pokeweed root, which grows as a towering weed in the US and elsewhere. Conium maculatum is poison hemlock, while Thuja occidentalis comes from the Eastern Arborvitae tree. Carcinosin is the only non-botanical in the group. It is made from a highly diluted extract of breast cancer tissue. These are typically used at the Banerjis' clinic in India to treat breast cancer. The use of poisonous plants to treat cancer, while unusual, is not necessarily controversial. Madagascar periwinkle, for instance, yields the familiar vinca alkaloids--vincristine and vinblastine. The aforementioned paclitaxel (Taxol) is derived from the bark of the Pacific Yew tree.

Even the use of a cancer tissue extract might be explained in immunological terms. No, what makes these remedies highly unusual is the degree to which they have been diluted. These are given in the Frenkel article as follows: Carcinosin, 30C; Conium maculatum, 3C; Phytolacca decandra, 200C and Thuja occidentalis, 30C.

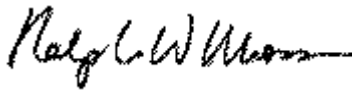
The "C" Number

What exactly does this "C" number mean? It is indication of the dilution of the active ingredient in an inert medium such as water. Thus, a "3C" dilution means that there is one molecule of an herb like Conicum maculatum in one million molecules of inert medium. It is theoretically possible that a medicine could consist of just one part of a chemical in a million molecules of inert liquid. For instance, we know that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has set a limit of 2 ppm for polychlorinated biphenols (PCBs) in fish (two parts of PCBs per million parts of fish tissue, per Maxim, 1984).

But as the "C" number rises, so does the dilution. Samuel Hahnemann, MD, the 19th century inventor of homeopathy, used 30C dilutions for many diseases. This means that

there is 1 molecule in "10 to the sixty" molecules of inert solvent. On average, this means you would have to give two billion doses of a 30C remedy per second to 6 billion people for 4 billion years in order to deliver a single molecule of the original material to any patient!

TO BE CONCLUDED, WITH REFERENCES, NEXT WEEK.



--Ralph W. Moss, Ph.D.

Last Updated (Thursday, 04 March 2010)