

Natrum Muriaticum and Oversupply

The mother of a 12-week old baby consulted with me for help with chronic oversupply of milk. Her older child is five and she managed to breastfeed her for 12 months, but it was an unpleasant struggle with profusely leaking breasts, plugged ducts and reoccurring mastitis due to the oversupply problems which meant the breasts were never fully drained. This was complicated by the fact that the baby had a tongue-tie which wasn't dealt with until she was five months old... "my nipples were trashed!"

She was the eldest of three children born after six miscarriages and was never breastfed due to a tongue-tie. During the Gulf War her parents left the country of her birth and she was raised in a European country, but ethnic differences made it difficult for her to fit in as her mother liked to cling to their traditional customs of dress and conduct. "I never had a 'bestie' at school; had to make do with just being a part of a group." "My mother became clinically depressed after our move and this has affected me greatly as I'm the eldest. She's very controlling and into emotional blackmail. That's partly why my husband and I have moved to another country to live; to put distance between us!"

Health history:

Meningitis at 1 year.

Chicken pox at 7 years.

Between 7-10 regular migraines (sometimes several a week) [< light; noise...probably > Bryonia]).

Asthma at 7 years...."sports-related and I grew out of it but it returned at 15 when I began smoking" (smoked for 10 years).

At 17 developed hives and chronic chest infections and chronic asthma...."lots of allergies: dust, mould; damp; pollen; cats and dogs".

Menarche at 11 and had no problems with menses but went on OCP at 15 for "bad acne". Its use did not agree with her. She suffered from hair loss and mood swings. Anxiety in her mid-20s caused her to stop OCP use.

Life history:

She loved learning and excelled academically at school. In order to get away from her mother she chose to go to a university in the UK. "Such freedom; to live and dress according to my desires! It was party time and I pretty much went off the rails; I discovered alcohol. I was looking for love and the alcohol kept me feeling sociable and able to enjoy myself."

"I had my heart broken by my first boyfriend when I was 20. He dumped me for another and was sly about it. It took me ages to get over it, but I eventually met my husband at 24 on a blind date. When we met I felt my chest become wide open and I could breathe! He's definitely 'the one' but I worry constantly that he'll dump me as my first love did....I dream about it regularly! "

She's slow to orgasm and can't with penetrative intercourse; but does spontaneously in dreams. She was terrified of giving birth with her first baby but managed to birth vaginally after being given *Natrum Muriaticum*. She rarely cries "...especially in front of my mother. I prefer to keep it all in." And so, I asked her about being uncomfortable having anyone hearing her urinate, and she confirmed that she did not like it. Another confirmatory symptom for *Nat mur* is her complaint that..."my hair is currently falling out by the handful!"

I advised some dietary protocols to improve the health of her hair and decided to prescribe *Nat mur* in descending potencies with repetitions.

Rx: *Nat-m* 10M on waking; *Nat-m* 1M at noon; *Nat-m* 200C in the evening; each dispensed in a cup of water so that stirring with a teaspoon could be easily done when repeating the cycle which was done for three days. Protocol was ceased then as she reported..."remedy is working really well, and supply has dropped. It's the best feeling ever not to be so engorged and in pain all the time."

Meanwhile, her baby began to refuse the breast. He's a typical *Calc carb* baby and has had anterior and posterior tongue ties snipped. Because the milk has been literally pouring from the breast he's developed an atypical mode of suckling which has affected his tongue and jaw. I prescribed *Calc carb* 30C and the mother began working with an osteopath who devised exercises and play protocols to enhance tongue mobility and she decided to pump and give her milk by a bottle which he initially accepted begrudgingly"he's a lazy, stubborn little fellow!"

She devised an expressing protocol of five times a day; with the last session at 9.30 – 10 pm. As he is a big baby she's providing him with about 200 mls for each of those feeds. She notices that the left breast provides 90mls and feels drained after pumping and so she extracts 110 mls from the right breast. However, she reports ... "it still feels like there's lots of milk, so I've been extracting a further 40-50 mls in order for it to feel comfortable like the other breast and have been freezing that milk. I'm worried that this right breast still has too much milk!"

I reassured her that one breast usually produces more milk than the other and that the breasts would now settle into a supply and demand pattern and encouraged her to cease the extra pumping of the right breast so as not to encourage high prolactin levels due to the extra nipple stimulation. As an interim measure I suggested that, after expressing, she soak the right breast in a dish of warm water to which she's added a handful of Epsom Salts. Magnesium sulphate is hydrophilic, so it attracts water into solution. And, as breastmilk is 85% water, it soon flows from the breast into the dish and the breast is relieved without the nipple stimulation that occurs with pumping. As far as the hypothalamus is concerned, the breast is merely leaking.

This is a protocol I've used for over 25 years and shared, to good effect, with local lactation consultant colleagues. One of them, Annette Stolz, who worked as a midwife and lactation consultant in Alice Springs, successfully initiated a pilot study at the hospital in which she worked of using Epsom Salts to relieve engorgement associated with the milk coming in and/or mastitis, with the basic rationale that it would afford cost-effective pain relief without the use of analgesia. During a 12-month period in 2005, 35 women chose to try this method of pain relief, with 31 of them reporting positive results with respect to their painful engorgement.

Within a week of her supply settling, she developed an URTI so I prescribed *Nat mur* 30C to be taken each morning (with succussion in between doses) until symptoms settled. During the 10 days that she was on the remedy, she initially reported: "I'm coughing up phlegm that is mainly in my throat and upper respiratory tract. The phlegm is either dark yellow or orange in colour and comes out in clumps upon waking. Nose excretion is a clear or, sometimes, light yellow when blown."

This all settled, and she then had a very interesting dream that indicated that the *Nat mur* had resolved the angst she'd been carrying all her life with respect to her mother. "It was a strange dream, but I found my voice in the dream and stood up to her - I called her out on expecting us to treat her differently to how she treats us when we are upset.

It's weird because I feel like my conscious mind accepts that she's just different and almost not mature enough to handle other people's difficult emotions but somehow in the dream, I told her that she wants us to be there for her when she's upset or angry but she isn't there for us when we are likewise." We chatted about how the dream indicates that she's reached a place of compassion with respect to her mother and her reaction was "... this is truly wonderful news as a lot of those hurts have haunted me for a long time! So emotional freedom is the biggest gift of all."

Her baby happily took to solids at six months, and never went back to the breast. Her breasts remained comfortable and she continued to pump for him until weaning.