

Role of Besan Paste in the Home Management of Bell's Palsy

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25 cases of Bell's Palsy were taken up for study to find out the role of besan paste in the home management of these cases. The application of besan paste in the cosmetic world is well acclaimed for its role of facial massage and for toning up the facial muscles. Its application in the management of Bell's palsy in the acute stage is studied here. Regular application of besan paste in addition to medicines, exercises, oral and ocular precautions, showed satisfactory results.

Facial paralysis in Bell's palsy is an entity commonly encountered in our day to day OPD practice. Management in the acute phase consists of massage, fomentation, exercises for facial muscles, vasodilators, steroids, care of eyes and oral hygiene, supplemented with multivitamins. Facial splints for Bell's palsy with residual paralysis are available. A simple and effective splint to maintain and improve the tone of the facial muscles is essential in the management of Bell's palsy especially in the acute stage. In our study, we have used besan paste as a facial splint with successful results.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

25 patients of both sexes in the age group 10-35 years attending the Rehabilitation OPD during the period January, 1977 to February, 1989 with a clinical diagnosis of Bell's palsy (average duration of illness 1-7 days) were studied to find out the results of application of besan paste as a facial splint and massage in the home management of facial paralysis. The patients were taught to make a paste of besan (gram flour) of thick

consistency by mixing besan and water (2:1) and apply the paste over the affected part of the face, with finger strokes in upward and outward direction. The paste is allowed to dry in the position which minimises drooping of the paralysed muscles, kept for a period of 25-30 minutes and then washed off with warm water. The procedure was repeated twice daily in the initial two weeks, followed by daily application in the subsequent weeks of therapy. Simultaneously, patients were given lines of treatment which includes drugs, exercises, electrical stimulation, massage, ocular and oral hygiene. Patients were followed up every 2 weeks for a period of 2 months.

RESULTS

Of 25 cases, 4 cases carried out only home therapy, using besan paste regularly as advised. These 4 patients did not receive electrical stimulation at any time. They showed complete recovery at the end of 2 months. The rest of the 21 cases did regular therapy both at home and in hospital. Of these, 12 cases showed 100% recovery, 9 cases showed approximately 75% recovery.

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TABLE : RESULTS OF THERAPY IN 25 CASES OF BELL'S PALSY

Treatment regime	Recovery (at end of 8 weeks)	Total No. of cases
1. Besan Paste & Standard regime (without electrical stimulation)	Complete	4
2. Besan Paste & Standard regime & Electrical stimulation	Complete	12
3. -do-	Partial (75% recovery)	9

DISCUSSION

Besan paste is easy to make and inexpensive. The procedure is simple and is easily taught to patients for use at home. Besan paste when dried maintains the tone of the muscles and prevents further sagging of the paralysed muscles thus acting as an effective facial splint. The process of applying paste in itself acts as a useful massage for the weak muscles. The local vasodilatation which results from massage and the effect of warm water used for washing off the paste, supplements the action of vasodilators and causes increase in local circulation. In our study, the 4 cases who recovered without electrical stimulation, could not receive electrical therapy as they could not come to the

hospital either due to domestic problems or because their homes were situated very far away.

Role of splints to prevent stretching and contractures in Bell's palsy with residual paralysis is well documented. An additional advantage with besan paste is that it can be readily applied and used for all effected areas of the face, whereas the other splints are applicable in preventing drooping of only the lower part of the face. The use of besan paste as a media for toning up muscles is widely used for cosmetic purposes. Its application in facial muscle paralysis in our study has shown equally optimistic results. It is suggested that besan paste splint and massage should be used in the management of all cases of Bell's palsy for a better therapeutic outcome.