Symposium on Peloid Therapy in Inpatient and Outpatient Medical Care: Observations and Evidence

Hattingen-Blankenstein, Germany, 9-10 March 2012

On March 9th and 10th, 2012, a symposium to discuss peloid therapy was held at Clinic Blankenstein in Hattingen, Germany, under the direction of Prof. Dr. med A.-M. Beer, Hattingen, Germany, and Dr. med. S. Fetaj, Vlotho, Germany, in cooperation with:

- The Ruhr-University, Bochum,
- Section VI of the German Peat Society (DGMT),
- The Study Group for Medical Hydrology, Physiotherapy, Rehabilitation and Acupuncture, a section of the German Society of Gynaecology and Obstetrics,
- The German Spa Association and
- The Institute for Applied Physical Therapy in Vlotho.

More than 18 speakers presented their findings on the therapeutic effects of healing soil, sapropel, silicon dioxide, mud and chalk.

G. Caspers, Hanover, Germany, gave an overview of the classifications of peloids from a geological perspective. A presentation by A.-M. Beer showed that the chemical effects of peat therapy are increasingly being researched and its application gaining in clinical importance.

It was previously thought that the thermal-physical effects were of primary importance but it has become increasingly evident that both the chemical and the thermal-physical effects are of equal importance.

Beer urged that, in the future, indications and contraindications of peat therapy be revised and findings be included in peloid analysis. And also, based on the limited resources available, that close communication should be maintained within the small community of scientific researchers dealing with these topics and that results be openly shared in order to achieve optimal, mutual benefit concerning this research.

J. Lukanov, Sofia, Bulgaria explained the chemical effects of peat. The biologically active substances found in peat have specific effects on the α,-adrenergic, D,-dopamine-and H,-histamine receptors. Furthermore, Lukanov explained that peat has a cyclooxygenase effect which dictates the indications for peat therapy.

Test results on the effect of peat baths on cytokines were presented by J.E. Goronzy and M. Ehnert of the Kerckhoff Clinic, Bad Nauheim, Germany (Department of Rheumatology and Immunology).
Their investigations were carried out in collaboration with the Weserland Clinic in Bad Sebruch. It was found that peat baths inhibited pro-inflammatory cytokines and stimulated anti-inflammatory cytokines.

K.R. Wiebelitz and N. Matthew, Hattingen, Germany, presented two clinical studies on a peat cream (Professor Lukanov, Psoriasis, Comp.). It was found that the peat cream showed significant efficacy in the treatment of swelling in inflammatory diseases such as Gonarthritis. In addition, the peat cream, when used on rare diseases such as torticollis, proved to be more effective than the placebo effect.

M. Goertz, Bad Kohlgrub, Germany, presented the concept for research practiced in the local resort spas of the Ammergau Alps. The study is currently recording, among other things, how many peat baths the average spa guest is taking during their stay and for what indications. The effects of peat baths on infertility patients are also being investigated.

K. Stankevica, Riga, Latvia, showed, in a chart presentation, that the use of sapropel is becoming increasingly important in medical hydrology treatment in Latvia.

H. Gerlach, Buhla, Germany, showed in her presentation that the contents of the newest edition of the German treatment catalogue allowed for only two medical conditions to be treated by peloid therapy and is the reason why it is rarely being used in daily practice.

A. Kiefer, Koblenz, Germany talked about the chemical aspects of silicon dioxide, also a peloid, and K.R.

Wiebelitz discussed the effectiveness of silicon dioxide as an adsorbent and stool hardener in cases of severe diarrhoea.

B. Uehleke, Charité Berlin, Germany, highlighted the results of two studies on the healing soil product from the Luvos Company, Germany, which has proven to be beneficial in the treatment of dyspepsia, irritable bowel movement and blemished skin.

Following that, A. Layer from Karlsruhe, Germany, introduced a new form of healing soil/clay from...
the salt lakes in the Crimea, Ukraine (ALNOVA Comp.).

A. Jerchel, Ruegen, Germany, reported on the application of medicinal chalk used on the island of Ruegen. It was reported that 400,000 tons of medicinal chalk are produced annually, however only 50,000 tons of which, are used for medical purposes. Scientific evidence of the positives effects of medicinal chalk are pending. The speaker pointed out, however, that, in the foreseeable future, studies to document the therapeutic effects of chalk could be expected.

R. Klocking, Erfurt, Germany, presented results of a Federal Institute for Education and Research (BMBF) project on the mechanism of the effects produced by humic substances. One part of the project showed that humic substances have an effect on the coagulation process. Another part of the project studied the anti-inflammatory effects of humic substances.

The investigations of Lukanov, Sagortchev and Beer, showed that humic substances specifically affect α and dopamine receptors. The key factor was that synthetic humic substances, such as caffeic acid, demonstrated specific effects similar to that of natural occurring peat substances. Which means that synthetic humic substances could be used in future therapy.

The symposium was dedicated to Prof. Dr. Claus Botho Goecke (* 1931 - † 2012), medical hydrologist, gynaecologist and mentor to Prof. A.-M. Beer, who died in January of this year and had rendered outstanding service in furthering the cause for peat therapy procedures.

Finally, a guided tour was provided by the Department of Naturopathy, Clinic Blankenstein, which was enjoyed by many of the participants. The event was considered to be, by both the participants and organizers, a total success.

The location of the next conference in 2014 will soon be announced.

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