

Infantile colic



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Colicky babies seem to be inconsolable...
but homeopathy can help says *Dr Tim Robinson*

Infantile colic is a common problem in babies, especially up to around sixteen weeks of age. It is characterised by incessant crying, often inconsolable, usually in the evenings and often through the night. Having excluded underlying pathology, the standard advice given by GPs and health visitors is winding technique, Infacol or Gripe Water. These measures are often ineffective but fortunately there are a number of homeopathic medicines that may be effective. In my experience Colocynth is the most successful; alternatives are Carbo Veg, Chamomilla and Nux vomica.

Why colocynth?

Recently I have treated two cases of infantile colic in my surgery. By coincidence they attended within a few days of each other. They both responded rapidly and spectacularly to Colocynth.

Ruby

Baby Ruby was presented to me at nine weeks old. She had been bottle fed from birth onwards. At four weeks she started to get colic; between 6-9pm each evening

she cried incessantly and inconsolably. She drew her legs up and was difficult to wind. She woke every 1-2 hours throughout the night, was difficult to feed and settle. At four weeks she was given Infacol which made no difference to her colic and made her gag each time she had it. I saw Ruby for her eight week

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check; by this time she had been suffering with her colic for four weeks continuously. I prescribed Colocynth 30c three times daily before feeds.

Sleep easy

I reviewed her one week later and was delighted to learn that Ruby had slept every night since starting the Colocynth. The first night she slept eight hours and subsequent nights five hours each. She was now feeding and winding well. She was no longer drawing her legs up. I advised her mother to slowly wean her off the Colocynth but restart it in the same way if the colic returned. Ruby’s mother was so impressed; she looked so much happier and fresher. The nicest thing she told me was that she was now ‘enjoying’ Ruby so much more.

Amelia

The second case of infantile colic was young Amelia, also nine weeks old. She was breast fed from birth. At two weeks of age, she started to have colic. During the day she was unsettled, frequently crying, drawing her legs up to her chest. She would only settle if she was being held. Each evening she would cry between 6pm and midnight. She needed frequent feeds to be pacified and didn’t want to be put down. She woke every night, at 1am, 3am

and 5am. She would feed and fall off to sleep, but then wake as soon as her mother attempted to put her in her cot and so the cycle would continue.

I deliberated between Colocynth and Chamomilla. I decide against the latter on the grounds that she did not have the angry, irritable features characteristic of Chamomilla. As before I prescribed Colocynth 30c three times daily.

Dramatic change

I reviewed her one week later. Amelia was 'a completely different little girl' according to Dad (quotes!). Grandmother also noticed a dramatic change in her, having seen her before and since the treatment. She was now settling after feeds, winding much more easily and having only brief bursts of crying during the evening. According to Mum, during the day she seemed 'much happier and more contented in herself'. She now lay willingly on the floor, needed very little comforting or holding. Each evening she had fed frequently but was now able to be put down without screaming. She was now sleeping for long stretches; on three nights she had slept from 11pm to 6.30am. The difference in Amelia had been noticed the day following the start of Colocynth and had continued from then onwards. Having had six weeks of colic and crying on a daily basis, Amelia's mother had certainly noted the difference, as had all the family! She herself was familiar with homeopathic treatment (her pregnancy nausea and heartburn was more effectively treated with Nux vomica than Gaviscon). She had already reduced the frequency of the Colocynth to twice daily and had continued to enjoy its benefits.

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Reply to critics

I wanted to share these cases for a number of reasons. They reminded me of how helpful homeopathy can be in the GP setting for conditions in which there is *no conventional treatment* or when *conventional treatment has been unsuccessful*.

Homeopathy critics would undoubtedly say that infantile colic is a self limiting condition and the babies got better for that reason. I don't deny that it is a self limiting but note that both of them, aged only eight weeks old, had suffered from colic *every day and night over the previous 4-6 weeks* and had got better *immediately* upon taking the medicine. I'm sure even the staunchest critic would find this difficult to comprehend, explain and dismiss.

No placebo

It is clear that the immediate improvement couldn't have been a placebo response. The babies did not know that they were receiving treatment with homeopathic medicine. At that age they are only just distinguishing faces and making eye contact. They are not old enough to visualise and comprehend the fact that they are having powdered remedies on a teaspoon twice daily.

Equally I don't believe that the mother's behaviour, willing the medicine to work was somehow being transmitted and received by the babies.

If our critics really wanted to be convinced that the response wasn't placebo or natural resolution perhaps they should interview the mothers to hear their story, they couldn't help being convinced.



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