

# Post viral fatigue syndrome

*Julie Geraghty* explains how a constitutional remedy is most effective

**T**he incidence of Post Viral Fatigue Syndrome (PVFS) has been increasing over recent years. It often affects young people, who fail to make a full recovery after an illness like glandular fever or influenza. Patients with this condition often turn to homeopathy, as general medicine has little to offer. Painkillers and antidepressants are often prescribed, as well as symptomatic treatment for associated irritable bowel syndrome etc, but recovery is often slow and frustrating.

Over the last six years I have become particularly interested in treating young people with PVFS, and have seen many cases cured with a good constitutional homeopathic remedy. There are no specific remedies for the condition – as always in homeopathy, the prescription needs to be individualised according to the patient’s story and symptoms. The situation that the person was in at the time they developed the viral infection, as well as their specific symptoms are both taken into account. This allows the homeopath to build up an understanding of the whole picture, and often helps the patient to realise the factors that contributed to their becoming ill. The viral infection itself is often the “final straw” which tips the

balance of health, when the patient is already under stress, and therefore more susceptible to picking up a virus.

**L**inda, a slender woman with long blond hair, big blue eyes, and wearing a soft pink jumper, was 22 when I first saw her in May 1999. At that time, she was a midwifery student, with chronic fatigue since she had glandular fever. She came with her mother, who seemed very caring and supportive.

The first sign of her health problems started in summer 1995, when she noticed that her hair was thinning, and she lost 5kg in weight. This surprised her, as she had actually been eating more than usual. Then she broke up with her boyfriend, and was really upset.

“By the following summer, I was getting tired really quickly, much more than my friends. I had to sleep during the day before going out. I had blood tests for anaemia, my blood count was 12, and I took some iron. I got back together with my ex-boyfriend, but it only lasted five months, and we split up finally in February 1997. He didn’t treat me well, he said I was too thin, always criticised me, and was too domineering. My hair still wasn’t back to normal, and I took sea kelp and multi

vitamins. I met another guy and we got engaged at the beginning of 1998, I’m really happy with him.”

In July 1998, Linda had bad tonsillitis. “I felt so tired, and my hair was really falling out. I was tested for glandular fever and was shocked when it wasn’t positive. In September, I had another bad bout. My tonsils were huge; I had an ulcer on my soft palate, my uvula was really swollen, it was almost touching my tongue, my eyelids were puffy and my neck was thick with glands. The pain from the glands went up to my ears; it was terribly sore to swallow. I was absolutely exhausted. Antibiotics did nothing, and then the test for glandular fever came up positive.

“I dreaded drinking because of the pain, but my throat was very dry. I drank cold drinks with a straw. My nose was blocked so I slept with my mouth open, so my tonsils got dry. I was afraid to go to sleep as my throat was so dry, I only slept for 20 minutes at a time. The pain made me cry, I’d just curl up and bury my head in the pillow.

“I was doing my final year as a student midwife when I got the glandular fever, and I had to give up. I feel very frustrated, there’s a lot of uncertainty. I’ve been making very slow progress this year, and I really want to start my

final year again in September. I need 12 to 14 hours of sleep a day, and since March I've been managing to work three hours per day in a newsagent. Six weeks ago my doctor started me on an antidepressant, I'm taking half a tablet per day. My appetite is now a bit better."

When I asked her why she chose midwifery, Linda explained that she'd always loved babies. "They're so vulnerable, I love holding them. I had lots of dolls as a child. I had to decide between nursing and midwifery, but I chose midwifery, as it's a happy job, not dealing with death, like in nursing. I'm very happy with the course."

I asked Linda a few more questions about herself to which she replied, "I love chocolate and chicken. I love dairy products, cereal with milk, cheese, butter, and eggs. I love fruit, except grapefruit. I like yoghurt, custard and hot chocolate. I can't miss a meal, I feel sick, windy... I have to eat something at 5pm. I have low blood

pressure, and feel light headed if I stand up too quickly. I love fresh air. My legs and arms get really tired at 3.30 to 5.30pm, I have to rest." She was on the Pill, as her periods were irregular, every three to five weeks. She has breast tenderness before her periods, she said she has very "glandular breasts".

I gave her Acidum lacticum (Lactic acid), 200c, three doses.

Within a week of taking the remedy she felt more energetic. "I don't have to sleep during the afternoon now. I'm getting better all the time. In August, we went on holiday; we did a lot of driving and I took another dose of the remedy then, but I feel I coped very well. I couldn't have considered going away four months ago. I have been able to go out with my friends again, I even went to a summer ball, and stayed up till 3am! I feel I will be able to manage to finish my course now."

Linda did restart her course, and was able to keep

up with the others. However in July the following year her mother phoned me as she has been admitted to hospital with very bad diarrhoea and dehydration, which was later confirmed to be Salmonella. I advised her to repeat the remedy.

A month later Linda told me, "I took the remedy as soon as they stopped the drip in hospital. I am so much better now; I think it really helped me to get my strength back. I was feeling a bit run down before I got the Salmonella, as I had just finished exams, and had worked really hard. But I finished my course, and I'm a midwife now!"

She has remained absolutely well since then.

**T**his case history shows how the viral illness is often superimposed on other symptoms that show that the person's health is already slipping out of balance. Linda's symptoms all fit well with the remedy Lactic acid. The whole group of "acid" remedies, including Phosphoric acid, is well known for weakness and exhaustion. All the "Lacticum" remedies have this characteristic tendency to low blood sugar, or hypoglycaemia, and the need to eat frequently. Also typical is the craving for dairy products and sweet foods. On the mental level, the Lacticum remedies suit patients who are very feminine and girlish, even childish and dependent. Linda's attitude to dolls and babies is typical, and her chosen profession is interesting! Lactic acid is also well known for the severe dryness of the throat and larynx.



*Linda explained that she'd chosen midwifery as a career as she'd always loved babies*



**Dr Julie Geraghty ChB DCH MFHom trained as a GP but now practises homeopathy full time in Edinburgh as well as teaching homeopathy to doctors and other health care practitioners in Scotland and abroad.**