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Excessive Acidity May Aggravate Urinary Disorders

A Case Study—A Novel Therapy For Interstitial Cystitis

Dr. Susan E. Brown, Ph.D., CCN

Sixty-eight million Americans suffer from various urinary conditions involving overactive bladder, urgency, frequency and pelvic pain. Unfortunately, there is a lack of effective treatments for these debilitating chronic problems but with a new therapy pioneered by a company called pH Sciences, there may be hope for people like Mary Smith.

Mary suffers from interstitial cystitis. She plans her entire day around how close she'll be to a bathroom. She often has to urinate over 40 times a day. She endures frequent pain and near-constant urgency. Her dream is to spend a whole day at the beach with her grandchildren. She takes a variety of medications and watches her diet very closely. The medications don't work very well and have some unpleasant side effects. Eating acidic foods like tomato sauce or drinking acidic beverages like coffee throw her symptoms into overdrive. She, as with so many others like her, feels trapped.

Mary's experience with acidic foods is

consistent with recent research suggesting that a condition known as chronic, low-grade metabolic acidosis may play a significant role in the severity of the symptoms associated with these urinary conditions. Metabolic acidosis occurs when the level of acidity in the body is destructively high. Actively managing the acid-alkaline balance in the body may help urinary condition sufferers reduce the severity and frequency of their symptoms.

An innovative natural, alkalizing compound, Alka-Plex™, was tested by a group of people diagnosed with interstitial cystitis (IC) and shows extremely positive results in reducing pain, urgency and frequency. Interstitial cystitis is among the most difficult of all chronic urinary conditions. This study's results form the basis of a new research agenda into the ill effects of chronic, low-grade metabolic acidosis, and the launch of a line of natural, science-based products to counteract the effects of destructive levels of acidity in the body.

Interstitial Cystitis

One of the most debilitating diseases related to excess acidity is interstitial cystitis. Interstitial cystitis is a painful disorder that affects well over a million people in the U.S. Interstitial cystitis is an inflammatory chronic pain pelvic disorder that results in recurring discomfort or pain in the bladder and pelvic region. More than 90 percent of those affected are women.

There are two commonly recognized types of interstitial cystitis. The most common type is known as "non-ulcerative IC." The second and less common type of IC is known as "ulcerative IC."

Symptoms include urinary urgency, frequency and pain. Pain may vary in intensity as the bladder fills or empties with urine. For some the pain of IC is excruciating. Frequency is not always related to bladder size and many people with IC have normal bladder capacity. Those with severe IC may urinate as many as 60 times a day and more than a dozen times a night. In women, symp-

toms are often reported to be worse during menstruation.¹ The causes of interstitial cystitis are not fully recognized. One theory considers IC to be an autoimmune disease, while other theories include the suggestion that its origin might lie in bladder scarring stemming from recurrent antibiotic use. In all cases it can be said that IC always involves inadequate bladder tissue repair, resulting in chronic inflammation of the bladder lining.

Interstitial Cystitis and Urine pH

In interstitial cystitis patients the bladder wall becomes hypersensitive and extremely vulnerable to the corrosive effect of highly acidic urine. Myself and other researchers and clinicians have long noted that moving towards a more alkaline pH of the urine provides considerable symptom relief for interstitial cystitis sufferers.²

Interstitial Cystitis and Chronic, Low-Grade Metabolic Acidosis

Unwittingly the vast majority of those consuming the modern Western diet labor under chronic, low-grade metabolic acidosis. This metabolic acidosis stems from our dietary patterns (diets which are high in protein and refined foods which create metabolic acids and are low in vegetables, fruits, nuts and seeds which contain compounds capable of neutralizing metabolic acids).

Chronic low-grade metabolic acidosis hampers the body's function in many ways. In particular, metabolic acidosis limits the body's self-repair mechanisms and in this way contributes to the development of "repair deficit" disorders such as autoimmune disease and interstitial cystitis.

Available Treatments for Interstitial Cystitis

In addition to mechanical stretching of the bladder, instillation of the bladder with DMSO, use of oral drugs such as Elmiron, antidepressants, antihistamines and surgery, interstitial cystitis patients report that diet is important. No scientific studies have assessed the relationship between diet and interstitial



cystitis or the severity of its symptoms. Nonetheless, IC sufferers have long noted that certain foods can greatly aggravate their condition. Thus an "Interstitial Cystitis Diet" has evolved which suggests that elimination of spicy foods, caffeinated and citrus beverages, highly acidic foods and other items that are often reported to increase inflammation and pain.

A Novel Approach to Interstitial Cystitis Symptom Reduction

Given the severity of the symptoms experienced by those with interstitial cystitis and the limited value of conventional therapies, there is a need for new symptom reduction and healing therapies. In the remainder of this article I discuss a pilot research project looking at one such new and promising alkalizing product developed by pH Sciences, Inc.

The approach to interstitial cystitis symptom relief discussed here concerns a natural, nutritional therapy aimed at:

- Reducing the acid content of aggravating foods and beverages
- Reducing the acidity of the urine, and
- Lowering the systemic burden of chronic, low-grade metabolic acidosis.

Two Year Follow-Up Report on The Use of the Alka-Plex Formula for Interstitial Cystitis

Between November 2000 and April 2001 Tamer[®] Laboratories, the parent company to pH Sciences, conducted an informal study of 18 interstitial cystitis patients using the patented Alka-Plex compound.

After three months' use of Alka-Plex, the interstitial cystitis patients reported that there was a 50 percent decrease in bladder and abdomen pain, a 31 percent reduction in urgency and 37 percent reduction of frequency. These results were impressive, particularly given the difficult nature of IC.

In February 2003, a two-year follow-up assessment was conducted on the long-term benefits of Alka-Plex used among the original Interstitial Cystitis Study participants. This assessment was designed and implemented by the Nutrition Education and Consulting Service in East Syracuse, New York.

Fifteen of the original 18 participants were located and interviewed. Thirteen were female and two were male. Five of these no longer continued to use Alka-Plex. While one might expect that the "dropouts" did not benefit from product use, this was not the case. Four of the five subjects who discontinued use reported significant symptom relief with Alka-

Plex. Due to various circumstances they did not continue use of Alka-Plex.

The 10 that were still using the formula had developed their own use pattern which met their needs.

Long-Term Sustained Benefits of Alka-Plex Use Among Interstitial Cystitis Patients

Over two years use the symptom relief benefits are not only sustained but substantial. Bladder pain was reduced by 43 percent, urgency of urination reduced by 35 percent, frequency of daytime urination reduced by 38 percent and frequency of night-time urination reduced by 37 percent.

After comparing product use for the short term and then the long term, it is evident that symptoms improved over time. In fact the reduction of frequency of day and night urination was greater over the two-year period.

Symptom Relief

Given the level of pain experienced by interstitial cystitis sufferers, all participants considered a 34 percent to 43 percent reduction in pain to be very significant. One participant detailed that she was so desperate she considered bladder removal. She couldn't stand up or eat without pain, nor could she sleep as she was "up all night" urinating. Her case was the most striking of all, as she reported 100 percent recovery of bladder health and full symptom relief with the use of Alka-Plex.

Another remarkable case of pain reduction involved a male subject with radiation cystitis. He had undergone radioactive "seed treatment" for prostate cancer. Treatment resulted in burning with urination. The pain continued to worsen until he found he would burn up to six hours after urination. Within one week of taking Alka-Plex, and the IC medication Elmiron, he experienced complete relief. He stopped taking Elmiron after a month and used only Alka-Plex with continued complete relief. This man attributes his recovery to the use of the Alka-Plex formula.

Urinary urgency and frequency are devastating symptoms that are also alleviated by Alka-Plex use. One woman reported that before starting Alka-Plex she had to urinate 40 times a day. With the products this was reduced to 25 times a day. In another case one male participant reported urinating 30 to 40 times a day even while using the conventional interstitial cystitis medications (Elmiron and Atarax). When he added Alka-Plex, his daytime urination was reduced by 30 percent and night time by 40 to 50 percent.

Additional Benefits

All users reported important collateral benefits from Alka-Plex use. The most mentioned was improvement of digestion with a correction of acid reflux and less bloating. For many participants, reduced nocturnal urination meant much better sleep. The benefits of more restful sleep appeared to have far reaching healing effects both physically and emotionally. Finally, it is worth remembering that not just IC, but all types of cystitis would likely benefit from Alka-Plex. The dramatic recovery of the man suffering from radiation cystitis illustrates this point.

Conclusion

This investigation concludes that the Alka-Plex formula provides immediate, significant and enduring benefits for those suffering from the symptoms associated with interstitial cystitis.

pH Sciences, under an exclusive license from Tamer Laboratories, is developing a line of Alka-Plex products to counter the effects of destructive acidity in body. Their first product, pH Control, helps reduce levels of urinary acid. By reducing the level of acidity in urine and promoting a healthier environment for the bladder, this enhances the bladder's overall repair/healing capacity and in this way plays an important role in tissue healing for those suffering from interstitial cystitis. ■

For more information on pH Sciences and the Alka-Plex formula call toll free 877-363-2243 or visit www.phsciences.com

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