

Curare - My family is shattering my world



Alicia Lee



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Summary: This case dates back to 2006 when the client presented in a state of extreme depression. Having "discovered" that she had been sexually abused, she was in the process of attempting to recover from the trauma. At this point she had just informed her family of the abuse and that she was going to name the cousin who had molested her as a child and the man in their church who had raped her. The family wanted her to remain silent and "just leave it be". She has many health problems and refers to herself as a 'hypochondriac'.

Keywords: Curare. Sexual abuse. Sleep apnoea. Paralysis. Insulin. Depression. Psychosis. Religious. Stigmatized. Hypochondria. Suicidal. Family dysfunction. Sensation shattered.

1st consultation: 15th June

Female, aged 44, unmarried, Profession: Church leader

Background information:

The client was born two months premature, in breach position, and placed in an incubator for a month: her mother caught a bus to the hospital every day to express milk and feed her (client has always had an aversion to the smell of dairy products, especially full cream milk – it smells like vomit and causes nausea). She is obese and has insulin resistance; smokes cigarettes and is on various allopathic medications including antidepressants and antipsychotics. She had a happy childhood; her family were 'strict Christians', and life revolved around the church. She was 'really naughty, and counter-culture', around the age of 13–14.

She is very well educated and is currently attempting a PhD, but has taken study leave and is not sure if she will be able to continue – she is suffering trauma from a newfound awareness and acknowledgement of sexual abuse which she experienced as a child and then again as a young adult. She 'discovered' this abuse in 2000; she had not completely forgotten the incidences, but she had not acknowledged to herself that they were indeed sexual abuse until she went for therapy. She kept her eyes closed for about 90% of the interview and made very, very little eye contact.

The client's language:

P: My therapist told me that 'other women with half this amount of abuse are either dead or crazy.' I never thought of the third option: incredible strength; I thought she was giving me permission to give up, and that's what I did. I admitted myself reluctantly to the psychiatric hospital three years ago on the advice of my therapist; I would have been

sectioned anyway. Then I attempted suicide while in hospital (overdose). Now I take antidepressant and anti-psychotic medication.

As well as the childhood sexual abuse, I was also sexually assaulted, raped, by members of my church. I kept having flashbacks of incidences that had receded to some part of my brain and it was a terrible shock to remember. I was shocked.

H: Please tell me more about your experience during the abuse. (She speaks about the childhood incident.)

P: (Weeping) Nothing. Zoned out. I know it was bad. I was gagging... shock of his tongue in my mouth. It's like I'm not there, I just disappear from myself. It's like I hover, looking on. It's not me, it's somebody else. The one that is me... there is nothing... just a dummy, an empty doll... serves its purpose... devoid of all feeling and conscience... he could have been humping a pillow for all I care; I was just waiting for the bubblegum that he had promised me.

I want to disclose this abuse. I feel quite liberated, like a different person. But my brother said he wanted his sister back [the way she was]. I froze. I just froze, I couldn't walk and then I said out loud that my abuser from the church had raped me twice. It was the first time I had said it. Another relative said about my disclosure, 'That's the devil talking'. Another said, 'Have you forgiven?' And I said, 'Don't moralize with me!' Another brother said, 'Just leave it be.'

(Weeping) My family were shattering my world; they left me feeling like shit, bawling my eyes out. Shedding tears in front of my family was

embarrassing, I wanted to die, I'd come so far only to get knocked back, I didn't want to live any more... trying, trying, trying, made heaps of progress and it was all bullshit. I blame myself for the sexual abuse, and I blame myself for my family's shocked reactions. I hadn't intended to disclose to them, I just wanted to give them warning that I was going to disclose to the community. I hadn't thought it through. They made me feel like shit.

She is prone to low blood sugar levels and somnolence - and falls asleep during the interview.

P: I kept up a façade. I'd sleep all day and then get up and shower and get dressed and go to my mother's for supper as if I'd been working all day. I was very manipulative.

Client speaks in a low-toned, somewhat confused, sleepy state again and her hand often covers her mouth. She supports her body by leaning on the table and exhibits great prostration.

P: During the abuse I split into two parts.

I feel very unsafe; I turn night into day because I feel very unsafe at night.

A stupid, naïve, pathetic person who deserves what she gets. (*Speaking about herself.*) Leave her to sort herself out. Where I was left behind. Where I was left.

I struggle to carry on, to pull myself together.

I keep my secrets to myself.

The memories of my childhood were coming back like a deluge that I couldn't control – like a tsunami; waves coming over and over, can't breathe, trying to get out, drowning.

I lost the plot and I came out shattered – broken into a thousand pieces, like a piece of pottery, glued together like a jigsaw to get on with life.

I see my childhood abuser (*a relative*) all the time. He's a pathetic wuss. I look at him and think: you're a weasel and a wanker. (*This is said with huge contempt. Her tone also becomes contemptuous towards the homœopath at one point during the interview.*)

(*Asthma since she got her little dog, that she clearly adores; also hay fever.*)

P. The asthma 'feels like drowning, I just give up' (*Leprosy – Syphilitic miasms*).

I put on weight as a part of my 'uglification', I put on about a stone (6.35kg) a year.

(*She suffers from sleep apnoea; wears a 'Continuous Pressure Airway Mask' at night. When waking to go to the toilet at night she bangs into everything, 'delirious'. She sometimes can't tell the difference between 'sleeping and being awake'.*)

P: My body was crapping out. My periods stopped for a year. Having sleep apnoea diagnosed was like a revelation, it is a major cause of depression, so there was a physiological reason.

I can't get off the toilet, and have difficulty doing the basic tasks of living. I have severe back pain; had to crawl to the phone, and wiping my bottom is too hard because of the pain. I have no sense of smell and don't know if I have an odour or not. The pain in my back is like shards of glass poking into me. Also spasms of pain. I wear incontinence pads because I leak when I sneeze or cough. I showered to come here, but basic tasks of living are hard to achieve. (*She gets government assistance for home help.*)

Throughout the interview she said, 'I'm not making sense', 'Did that make sense?', 'What was I saying?', 'What day is it? I can't remember.' There is much confusion.

The main theme of her dreams is her father who died of renal failure.

P: I spend more time with him (*he is dead*) than with my mother (*who is alive*). I go to sleep to be with him. (*She wears a gold ring with the word 'Dad' on it; all the members of her family have this matching ring.*) My father was excellent, humble, too much so. His life revolved around the church, and the community. He wanted to be a Minister.

About her menses she says, 'No problems during bleeding, but it's annoying, a pain, I haven't used this womb once in my life. It's unnecessary baggage I still carry around with me. I should have had a hysterectomy at nine... if I had known'.

I have headaches all the time, a state I'm so familiar with ... have it more than I don't have it. It is in my forehead, my temples and even my face. I drive to the cafe, have a mochaccino, with my little dog and all my problems just go away. I love coffee. The pain is like a hangover, heavy, head too big for neck, makes me drowsy, close my eyes, so used to having it I don't notice, as if it's normalized. I'm a hypochondriac... make my living out of it.

Analysis:

The keys to this case are her assertions:

My family were shattering my world. I was shocked. I froze, I couldn't walk. (Paralysis)

According to *Dr. Rajan Sankaran*¹ the **Loganiaceae family** has the sensations of being shattered, shocked, let down, disappointed, ruined, paralysed, torn to pieces.

The **Leprosy miasm** has the **feeling of being like shit**. Complete loss of self-dignity. Profound depression. Intense hopelessness. Extremely sensitive. Very deep emotions. Intense oppression. Turning to God and religion. Loathing of life. Self-disgust. Self-contempt. Contempt for others. Self-hatred. Self-harm. Suicidal impulses. Obesity and Ongoing profound physical decay.

And **Curare**, which is in the Loganiaceae family, Leprosy miasm, has the feeling: that they are *intensely shocked and shattered and disappointed by being abandoned by their relatives*.

What is clear from the repertorisation is that *Curare* would not have been the indicated medicine had I not used Sankaran's Sensation method.

Rx: Curare 1M liquid, one dose of five drops. Appointment for next consult in one month.

1st Follow up 29th July

Intermittent episode of the pain beginning about three weeks after the medicine while driving on the motorway; had to pull over. Wanted to ring 111 but didn't because she didn't want the 'humiliation of getting help', 'didn't want to call anyone there unnecessarily', 'didn't want to be a hypochondriac time-waster'.

P: Pain: like stomach was 'doing a somersault', 'the organ was turning around', 'acute', 'excruciating', 'squeezing', 'as if doing sit ups and the stomach continues to move without you', 'I've never had a contraction [as in having a baby], but I imagine it's like that'. Sensation of having a heart attack, breathing as if asthma, sweating. Pain wanders around the abdominal area. I felt real panic because I didn't know if it would go away. Ultrasound negative for stones in gall

1. Mind, Sexual abuse, ailments from; Murphy pg 1101		anac		CARC		lyc	med		NAT M	OP	plat	sep	STAPH	thuj
2. Mind, Suicidal disposition; Complete 426	ambr	anac	Crot c & h, lach	carc	cur	lyc	med	Lac d, eq	Nat m	op	plat	sep	staph	thuj
3. Breathing, Difficult, sleep, during; Murphy pg 194			Cench LACH			lyc				op		sep		
4. Mind, Fear, of being alone; Murphy pg 1044			naja	carc		LYC						sep		
6. Secretive; Complete pg 398						lyc		Lac h	Nat m			sep		thuj
7. Delusions, air, that he is hovering in, like a spirit; Complete pg 107			lach					Lac c Lac lox						
8. Religious, affections, general; Complete pg 372		anac	LACH	carc		lyc	med		Nat m		plat	SEP	STAPH	thuj
9. Female, Menses, general, amenorrhoea; Murphy pg 484		anac				LYC			Nat m	op	plat	SEP	staph	thuj
10. Reproaches himself; Complete pg 373	ambr	anac		carc			med	Lac eq	Nat m		plat	sep	staph	
12. Dreams, of dead people; Complete pg 181		anac	cench			lyc	med	L. lox L. lup			plat			THUJ
TOTAL	AMB 2/3	ANAC 6/6	SNAKE	CARC 7/5	CUR 1/1	LYC 14/8	MED 8/5	LACS	NAT M 11/6	OP 7/5	PLAT 9/6	SEP 17/8	STAPH 10/5	THUJ 9/6

Murphy = Homeopathic Medical Repertory, Robin Murphy, Indian Books & Periodical Syndicate, 1993; *Complete* = Complete Repertory of Mind, Roger van Zandvoort, IRHIS, 1998

bladder or kidneys. It did show a couple of uterine fibroids, one of which is big enough to be pushing up into the bladder, causing me to get up at night, every hour, to go to the toilet.

H: How is the sleep apnoea?

P: Doing the disclosure thing has made it worse. Both of the respondents are denying everything. It's draining. Work (*she is in a public service position*) has been demanding. On my toes all the time. Didn't get to sleep until 2:45 a.m., then up every hour for the toilet. Sleep is my worst enemy at night, hardest thing for me to do; yet I'm so tired. I'm too much in my head. Legs... restless, achy, have a life of their own. Sensation like pins and needles, irritable. I am lethargic, tired. My medication makes me feel famished, a bottomless pit.

I have emerged from the question of forgiveness. I have been to hell and back and lived to tell the story. As a child I feared the church, I associated it with blood. I hated it. I was so busy trying to please God that I forgot what I was here for in the first place.

(At this point we are interrupted by a phone call from her lawyer to discuss the denials of the accused. And she is extremely depressed when the call is finished.)

P: I'm humiliated. I'm patronized. I've put out these disclosures and nothing is going to come of it. They are just going to laugh. I get impulsive... want to drive off a cliff. I've got a headache. Sensation that it is full of water, when I move in any direction water goes there and 'bang'! It's a constant presence. Heavy on my head, pushing my eyes down. Heaviness all across my forehead, especially over the eyes. Like thunderclouds rolling there. Chinese massage helps.

I deserve what I've been getting anyway: no recognition, treated like a nobody, not respected.

I love dolphins. They are special; they represent the souls of dead sailors. And my favourite colour is teal: the deep ocean = freedom. Dolphins have the best of both worlds, depth of the sea, and above water from time to time. They have strong family ties with one another. I've written poems about the

ocean; free and final... I like those words. Once you fall into the ocean it's very difficult to get out. Freedom is being a dolphin, a mermaid, a creature who can swim down below with the beauty all around. It's so refreshing.

H: What is the opposite of this?

P: Death. Darkness. Too deep for sun to get down there. It's liveable, you adapt to it.

H: Tell me about adapting.

P: It becomes a home. Even the darkness has a purpose; you can have a good sleep in it. And there are side doors to use, into the blue brightness of another adventure playground... the Great Barrier Reef. Darkness is a retreat from it all. Darkness is almost like a shade, a shadow of my reality, it's there all the time; I can't deny that as a part of my reality. Dark night of the soul.

H: What is the opposite of a dolphin?

P: Shark. Killers. I'm not sure if they are trainable or tameable. Is it possible to own a friendly shark? When people give them what they want, e.g. a place to lie down. They are the enemy – train them or cut them out of your life.

H: If you can't cut them out?

P: You learn to live with it. Do some research and hope to convince...

(She loses her train of thought completely here.)

H: Did you notice any response when you took the medicine?

P: Oh yes, I wondered if I tingled all the way down... ahhhh... that felt good. I had a sense of expectation and it rewarded me with it. I felt good, as if it was something right for me and nobody else. Good!

H: Have you had any dreams?

P: Too many. I can't recall any... I'm confused because I've been re-reading old diaries and old letters... weird... I found an

intense ten-page letter that I have no memory of at all. My old therapist was a patronizing git with an attitude that my abuse was self-inflicted, self-initiated. She told me that I fucked men with words... (*She loses her trail of thought again.*)

(*She mentioned movies so I asked what her favourite movie was.*)

P: *The Mission* with Robert De Niro. It's about Jesuits going into deep dark South America and converting the Indians... giving them something to hope for but then wanting to colonize and annihilate them off the face of the planet... and De Niro is very handsome. The scene where soldiers are going to burn the village... little boy... the kids in the choir stood with the cross as the army moved in... I was extremely angry at the church.

(*N.B. Curare is from 'deep, dark South America'.*)

Thoughts:

The themes in the case remain the same. The patient is still deeply depressed but is in the early stages of bringing charges against her abusers so this is not unexpected or surprising.

Repeat Rx: Curare 1M liquid, one dose of five drops. Appointment for next consult in one month.

2nd Follow up 13th September

P: I'm now dating two guys! It's the first dating I've done in eight years. It feels different now... maybe it's the homœopathy? Euphoria? Things have been going right. Until tea with this woman this morning; it was transference of anxiety. She has a way of doing this... manipulating the situation. I'm pissed off, defensive. It was privileged information, I shouldn't have shared.

Now I feel unsafe. People can climb through windows, through the back door when I'm at the same level as the road. Vulnerable to intruders.

H: If someone breaks in?

P: Sexually assault you. Kill you. Beat you. Steal your belongings. Sexual assault would be the worst: I'll still be alive to think about it. If I were killed it would be over. If I weren't killed I'd have to relive the whole thing again: police, forensics, checking my body, etc. I'm certain I wouldn't sit on it for 25 years anyway.

H: What about the childhood assault?

P: I never considered it an offence until recently. Everything was done below the clothing. It was simulated. I knew it was wrong. I prostituted myself for bubblegum. I shouldn't have accepted bubblegum if it was wrong. I knew it was a crime.

The ones in the church are still in their positions. They need to be accountable. I have been talking to others about forgiveness. For me his abuse triggered illness and hospitalization. I was totally shocked, not expecting what I got... violated. One minute driving home, the next he rapes me. I'm not ready for this. Petrified. I had no choice in the act. My memory is blank. That incident became a blank, a non-event, went into the recesses of my mind. The second time it happened I remembered the first time. Both incidences were identical. Predatory approach.

I had been a role model for the other kids in the church – then raped... shame... ashamed. Convinced myself it had been an act of love, that he had intentions for me. So that delayed me reporting it. I had never done anything wrong, never had a boyfriend, dutiful daughter. They never said anything,

never praised me. Dad extremely humble, mother extremely proud. Thinks she has the best family, all successful. Look here, honey, I've just burst your bubble; it's not that way any more. A new reality – don't sweep it under the carpet. They stigmatized me – the whole family did, buried their heads in the sand. Stigmatized. Death became life, life became death. Suicidal thoughts became the norm; it would help alleviate the pressure on my brain. I'd be free from the world.

H: Pressure on the brain?

P: (Laughs) Conforming and expectations against my natural... who I was. A hard battle, climbing Mt. Everest. Upstream against the current. Years... all my childhood.

H: Your true nature?

P: What I am today... a free spirit. I like to think it was integrity at its best. Truthful to myself and that's how my relationship with others would be.

Depth of grief – black, bottomless pit; height of power – the sky is the limit.

My first date in eight years – the chemistry was strong, a great attraction. A mutual sexual encounter. I became the centre of attention. It wasn't about him ~ it was about me. I could die happy now. I've had so many dysfunctional experiences with sex, this time it was my choice. That's why I never married... but now... now I have regrets.

The dizzy spells are gone. I had a bit of confusion this week, got my days mixed up.

H: The pain in your abdomen?

P: I think it is irritable bowel syndrome. And I've also quit smoking!

Rx: Curare 1M liquid, one dose of five drops. Appointment for next consult in one month.

3rd and final consultation 8th Nov.

No more attacks of abdominal pain. Developing a sleep routine, with soft music. Reducing some medication and completely off four medications.

Better diet.

Using a new sleep breathing machine and sleeping soundly.

Still not smoking cigarettes.

Meeting new people.

P: Every time I have the medicine I see more improvement: quit smoking, freedom to explore relationships, desire to get fit. I'm gaining strength.

Repeat Rx: Curare 1M liquid, one dose, five drops only.

At this point the client felt able to continue her life without further homœopathic treatment.

Alicia dropped by to visit her client at her home in April 2011.

Client is now happily married to a very good-natured man. She is employed and enjoying her work, has re-started her PhD and is now halfway through it. She is on good terms with her family and has a circle of friends that she exercises and socializes with. Her health is much improved. In short, she is somewhat of a free spirit today.

Reference

Rajan Sankaran, *An Insight into Plants*, vol. III, p 1309 (Homoeopathic Medical Publishers, India, 2002).



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<http://www.flickr.com/photos/markybon/>

CURARE
Chondrodendron tomentosum
Loganiaceae family Cur.

Loganiaceae family sens:
Shocked, Let down,
Disappointed, Torn to pieces,
Shattered, Ruined

As written in the Pharmacopoea: 'Unstandardised extracts derived mainly from the bark of various species of strychnos and chondodendron, prepared for use as arrow poisons by Indians in the Amazon and Orinoco valleys, and in the Guyanas. It varies considerably in appearance and composition. Three kinds of curare have appeared in commerce, distinguished by the kind of containers in which they were packed: tube curare or bamboo curare, pot curare and gourd curare or calabash curare. Curare available for medical use, under the name 'Intocostrin' is a physiological standardized extract from Chondrodendron tomentosum R. and P'.

Thanks to Shirley Gay, Simillimum Pharmacy, New Zealand

