

Germes as Friends and Foe? Medical and Naturopathy Perspective

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Abstract

Thousands to millions of people lost their lives due to epidemics and pandemics in the past centuries. Allopathic Medical Scientists concluded that deaths during epidemics or pandemics had been caused by one or other type of germ. This conclusion or belief (germes are the cause of all diseases) was further strengthened during the fifth to sixth decade of twentieth century as increased production and use of antibiotics, antivirals and vaccines saved billions of lives throughout the world. Moreover, it (use of antibiotics and antivirals to treat infectious diseases) has been one of the reasons for decreased mortality rates throughout the world in the past hundred years. Yet it should be remembered that germes are not the primary cause of all diseases. Moreover, several types of germes are friends, not foes. This article revisits the truth of germes as friend as well foe in terms of modern medical and naturopathy perspectives.

Keywords: Germes; Bacteria; Viruses; Fungi and Protozoa; Medical/Allopathy; Naturopathy.

INTRODUCTION

The word 'germ' is derived from the Latin term 'germen' which means 'seed, sprout'. The germes¹ mean those microscopic organisms, especially which causes disease. The germes are found all over the world, in all kinds of places. They can invade plants, animals and people, and sometimes they can make us sick. There are four² main categories of germes - bacteria, virus, fungi and protozoa as follows:

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Benefits of Friendly Bacteria

It is surprising that humans have more bacteria in the body than cells. Bacteria³ live on skin, inside the nose, mouth, vagina and in the guts (intestines) and most of them live in the guts. These bacteria protect us from bad bacteria causing disease.

Human get the microbes from their mother in the womb, during delivery while passing through vagina and after delivery while contacting the mother's skin. The babies also get microbes from doctors, nurses and environment they live in. While 99% of bacteria are good for our health and the health of the earth's ecosystem and even some bacteria are used to make medicines and vaccines, 01% of bacteria which causes diseases that are treatable by antibiotics.

The ten most harmful bacteria⁴ to the human being are - pseudomonas aeruginosa, enterobacteriaceae, ecinetobacter baumann, enterococcus aureus, helicobacter pylori, species of campylobacter, salmonellae, neisseria gonorrhoeic, streptococcus pneumoniae, hemophilus influenza, several species of shigella.

Benefits of Friendly Viruses

Contrary to the bacteria, the most viruses causing disease are not treatable by antibiotics but rather by antiviral medicines. The primary prevention for viral infections is vaccination. All the viruses are not bad. Several viruses help to kill bacteria, while others can fight against more dangerous viruses. Like protective bacteria, several viruses are protective of our body. Bacteriophages (or phages) are viruses that infect and destroy specific bacteria. These are found in the mucus membrane which lines the digestive, respiratory and reproductive systems. The viruses are beneficial for increasing agricultural production.

The ten most harmful viruses⁴ to the human being are - marburg, ebola, rabies, HIV, smallpox, hantavirus, influenza, dengue, rotavirus, SARS-CoV-1, SARS-CoV-2, MERS-CoV, Covid 19.

Benefits of Friendly Fungi

Common men think that they would never like to eat fungi, but in reality, we consume various types healthy fungi. The Commonest of them are yeast and mushroom. Yeasts are used to make beverages (alcoholic drinks, beer, soft drinks) and bread. The most food prepared after fermentation process does involve some form of fungi like bread, idli and dosa (south Indian foods), etc. Mould fungi have been exploited to create a wide range of industrial products, including enzymes and medicines (antibiotics, immuno suppressants, statins, anti-cancer drugs). Presence of fungi in the soil aid to increase fertility in organic agriculture. Fungi also help to control the population of damaging pests.

We do eat mushrooms are part of our dish, yet all the mushrooms are not healthy instead they are poisonous. Fungi cause three types of human illness, viz. poisoning, parasitic infection, and allergies.

The ten most harmful fungi⁴ to the human being are - amanita phalloides, conocybe filaris, webcaps or cortinarius species, autumn skullcap or galerina marginata, destroying angels (amanita species), podostroma cornudamae, deadly dappling or lepiota brunneoincarnata, candida, trichophyton.

Benefits of Friendly Protozoa

Protozoa primarily feed on bacteria, and secondarily on soluble organic matter and rarely on other fungi. Many protozoa are beneficial in the environment because they help to make it more productive. They improve quality of water by eating bacteria and

other particles. They also play an important role in mineralizing nutrients, making them available for use by plants and other soil organisms

The ten most harmful protozoa⁴ to the human being are - African trypanosoma (cause sleeping sickness) American trypanosoma (cause chagas disease), giardia (cause giardiasis), plasmodium (cause malaria), leishmania (causes leishmaniasis), toxoplasma gondii (cause toxoplasmosis), cryptosporidium parvum and cryptosporidium hominis (cause cryptosporidiosis), amoeba, excavata, SAR, and archaeplastida.

Germs as Foe: Cause of Disease – Fact and Myth

Ever since thousands to millions of deaths from time to time due to epidemics and pandemics in the past centuries throughout the world, Allopathic Medical Scientists concluded that deaths during epidemics or pandemics had been caused by one or other germ. This conclusion or belief (germs are cause of all diseases) was further strengthened from the fifth and sixth decade of the twentieth century as increased production and use of antibiotics, antivirals and vaccines saved billions of lives throughout the world. Moreover, it (the use of antibiotics and antivirals to treat infectious diseases) has been one of reasons of decreased mortality rates throughout the world the past hundred year. Yet it should be remembered that germs are not primary cause of all the diseases. Moreover, several types of germs are friends, not foe. For an example, there are over four hundred types of healthy germs found in the intestines of a healthy man which aids its functioning. These days prescription of prebiotics and probiotics (types of healthy bacteria) to treat digestive disorders have become common practice among the General Physicians of Allopathy. These doctors also recommend to take curd (which contain a form of germ - yeast fungi) to replenish healthy bacteria after a course of antibiotic is over in an infected person.

Germs as Friend: Some Observations and Shreds Evidences

In fact, our bodies are always full of germs which play important part in its working. The destructive (catabolism) and constructive (anabolism) processes go on within the body throughout life. As at macro level, all living matter must die and starts disintegrating and bacteria play an important role in this natural process, similarly, so at micro level the most types of cells die every day in human

body and the germs play role in their (dead cells) transformation before the body throw them out as waste matter. Even, not just in destructive process, but in the constructive process of transformation of our food elements into absorbable form (e.g. protein transforms into amino acids, carbohydrate into sugar or glucose, fat into fatty acid, etc.) germs play a role of the transformational agents other than digestive enzymes. Hence, germs should not always be considered as foe, they are friend too. In the view of Naturopathy, in reality germs are friend and not foe so long we give them favourable surrounding to be active. Germs are present in disease not as a cause but superficial helpers brought there by nature to rid the body of disease. They are scavengers. To illustrate, germs may be compared to flies which grown in household filth instead of bodily filth. Germs are effects of disease and not its cause, and will disappear when real and favorable cause has been disposed off. No one who is clean and healthy inside can be affected by germs or become the victim of germs infection. Some of the examples^{5,6,7,8} are:

- Dr. Hamer (1915) in his investigation concluded that it is typhoid fever which leads to development of the bacillus and not via versa and the bacillus should be looked upon as effect, rather than the cause.
- Professor Pettenkofer, who was world known physician and professor of medicine at swallowed a test tube full of cholera germs, created a sensation among his students in their presence in the laboratory by drinking a glass of water contain millions of cholera germs sufficient to kill large number of people. Nothing happened to him to prove the point.
- Dr. Ruderman a physician in the state of Wisconsin, smeared his body with the exudate of small pox sores in order to demonstrate to his medical colleagues that a healthy body could not be affected with the disease. Not a single spot of small pox developed through this exposure. But he was arrested and quarantined in jail.
- Dr. Thomas Powell of California, who lived to the ripe old age of eighty, voluntarily introduced more germs into his body than any other man. He had challenged his physician friends to make him ill by introducing any sort of germs in his body. Many bacteriologists took up the challenge and tried repeatedly, over a number of years to prove him wrong. Germs of cholera, plague and other disease were given to him in his food, injected into his veins, applied to his throat after scraping its mucous membrane, but Dr. Powell did not contract any of these diseases.
- An eminent and learned nature cure practitioner, Dr. Herbert Shelton confidentially asserts that bacteria do not cause diseases, but on the contrary it is only in diseased and toxic surroundings, that they can carry on their noxious activities. It is only when our improper ways engender a poisonous environment that cause the accumulation of toxic materials in our bodies that bacteria invade them. An important consideration is that if bacteria caused diseases, their presence in the body must precede the appearance of the symptoms of the disease. It is logical that cause should precede effect. But scientific investigations have made it clear time and again that bacteria have been found in bodies only after the symptoms have manifested themselves. This indicates that the symptoms (and therefore the accumulation of toxic substances) are the cause, and the proliferation of bacteria the result, and not the other way round.
- People in ordinary health contain germs within their bodies. The same germs are claimed to be the cause of those of some infectious diseases in other who have lowered vitality and body is clogged with waste materials and impurities.
- Germs in the curd, yoghurt and several beverages are friendly and useful.
- Micro-organisms are secondary manifestations of disease. Bacteria and parasites live, thrive and multiply to the danger point in a weakened and diseased organism only. Bacteria or their microsomia are practically omnipresent. We absorb them in food and drink, we inhale them in the air we breathe. Our bodies are literally alive with them. Bacteriologists unanimously declare that in the various disease germs are found not only in disease bodies, but also in the bodies of seemingly healthy persons. A celebrated French bacteriologist found almost the most of the disease germs known to medical science in the mouth of a healthy infant of two months age.
- Instead of concentrating its energies upon

killing the germs, whose activities we cannot escape when the conditions are ripe, nature cure endeavours to invigorate the system, to build up blood and lymph on a normal basis and to purify the tissues from their morbid encumbrances in such a way as to make germ activity unnecessary.

- Our bodies are always full of germs, they play an important part in the working of the body, especially the destructive processes. Constructive and destructive processes are always going on within the body, night and day, asleep or awake, whether we know it or not. When any living matter dies, it immediately begins to disintegrate into the simple chemical elements of which it is composed, and it is in breaking down dead organic matter into its elemental constituents that bacteria are always employed by nature. We all know that a dead animal left lying about unburied will soon begin to rot; and it is precisely in this rotting process, that germs are active. All living matters must die and be reduced to dust again, and bacteria are the appointed agents. They are the agents of disintegration.
- Germs take part in all disease phenomena because these are processes requiring the breaking down or disintegration of accumulated refuse and toxic matter within the body, which the system is endeavouring to throw off. But to assume, as our medical scientist do, that merely because germs are present and active in all disease phenomena, they are therefore the cause of these same diseases, is just as wrong as it would be to assume that because germs are present and active in the decomposition process connected with all dead organic matter, they are the cause of the death of the organic matter in question. The analogy is absolutely ridiculous. But no one would say that because the decaying body of a dog is full of bacteria, the bacteria are the cause of the dog's death; we know that they are there as a part of the natural disintegrative process taking place as a result of the death of the dog. And so, it is with germs and disease. Germs are part of the results of disease, not its cause. Germs are present in disease not as causes, but as superficial helpers brought there by nature to rid the

body of disease. They are the 'scavengers' employed by mother nature to break up and 'bring to a head' the accumulated internal filth of years of unhygienic and unwholesome living, which are clogging the tissues of the body and preventing proper functioning. It is the elimination of internal filth and waste material which is required if the treatment of disease is to be effective, not tinkering with germs. They will automatically disappear when the bodily filth and refuse have been disposed of upon exactly the same analogy as that of files and household filth, instead of bodily filth. Naturopathic practice proves this beyond doubt every day. Treatment which is directed towards the end of killing germs is a treatment that can never be really effective, because it ignores the real causes of disease. Thus, although germs are the very bugbear of orthodox medical science, they are of little account to naturopathy, because the naturopath realizes that they are part of the effects of a disease, and not its cause, and will disappear when the real cause has been disposed of. No one who is clean and healthy inside can be affected by germs or become the victim of germs infection.

The above observations and studies show the germs are not the cause of disease and something else. That something is the unhealthy which is accumulated morbid and foreign matters lowered due to poor life style and immunity serves as the lethal combination with the germs to cause several infectious diseases and even death.

Germs as Foe or Friend: Naturopaths' Opinions

Germs are not the real cause of a disease. They are friends not foe: Nature cure believes⁹ that the primary cause of disease is the accumulation of morbid or waste or foreign matter in the body over a period of time. Germs and bacteria can be secondary conditions. In a healthy body where secretion and excretion are normal no germ or bacteria can survive or multiply because they are immediately destroyed by the antibodies present in our secretions therefore it is of utmost importance to follow right living habits to keep the blood stream clean, free of morbidity and slightly alkaline in nature. It

is only when improper living habits create a diseased and poisonous environment in the body, that germ are able to invade it.

Note of Caution

The germs are microscopic organisms which we cannot see with the naked eyes. Neither we can assess when they are in our surroundings nor when they have invaded our body. So, in the alarming situations of epidemics, pandemics and the most probable periods of germ infections, the wisdom of 'prevention is better than cure' is inevitable to follow by wearing masks, sanitizing our hands, social distancing, vaccinations, etc.

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