

Mentat in mental subnormality

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ABSTRACT

The effect of Mentat in improving intellectual function was studied in 41 patients of mental subnormality due to varied aetiology. The improvement noticed was assessed by intelligence quotient, memory, ability to grasp and understand, intellectual activity in school, social adaptability of the child, speech improvement, visual perceptual ability improvement, control of hyperactivity and improvement in attention span. The study lasted between 1-7 months. Twenty patients showed satisfactory clinical improvement. No untoward side effects were observed except in 2 patients, one being a patient of chorea, who developed increase in movements and in co-ordination. Mentat was subsequently discontinued. In another patient who developed gynaecomastia and excessive salivation, the symptoms subsided on decreasing the dose of Mentat.

Four out of 7 patients who developed hyperactivity following the use of phenobarbitone also showed improvement with Mentat.

INTRODUCTION

A child with mental subnormality with all its associated hazards is a perplexing problem not only to the parents and society, but also to the attending paediatrician and geneticist. So varied is its multifold aetiology that it is often difficult to pinpoint the causative factor producing Mental retardation. Even if one is able to diagnose the cause for mental subnormality, in the majority of cases, except such treatable ones like cretinism, therapy is still more difficult. Various hormones, vitamins, sera and enzymes have been tried with variable results.

The present report deals with a study of 41 children with mental subnormality who were given an indigenous remedy Mentat with a view to improve on their intellectual faculty and control hyperactive behaviour in patients on antiepileptic drugs like phenobarbitone.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Forty one cases of mental subnormality were selected from the paediatric wing of the Sassoon General Hospitals, Pune. The patients were thoroughly examined and all necessary investigations like C.S.F., Urinary screening, Serum PBI, and Chromosomal culture were done to arrive at a cause for the mental subnormality. The I.Q. of the patients was tested by Binet-Kamat's tests. After having excluded cretinism, the patients were given Mentat, 1 to 2 teaspoonfuls three times a day for 1 month.

Subjective and objective assessment was done on all patients at the end of 4 weeks using the following parameters:

1. Alteration in intelligence quotient.
2. Improvement in memory, understanding and ability to grasp.
3. Intellectual improvement in school.
4. Social adaptability of the child.
5. Improvement in speech.

6. Control of hyperactivity in patients on phenobarbitone.

Those patients who showed some improvement in mental faculty received Mentat for a period of 1-6 months more and the same tests were performed again.

OBSERVATIONS

The age-wise distribution of patients is shown in Table 1.

Table 1	
Age (in years)	Total
0 – 5	4
6 – 10	20
11 – 15	13
16 and above	4
	41

Table 2 shows the number of cases that showed some intellectual improvement after Mentat administration.

Table 2				
Total no. of cases	No. of cases with improvement	Percentage	No. of cases not improving	Percentage
41	24	59%	17	41%

Table 3 shows the results of various tests applied before and after the use of Mentat.

Table 3				
Parameter		Considerable improvement	Some improvement	No improvement
1.	Increase in I.Q. more than 10 points	6	–	20
2.	Increase in I.Q. more than 5 points	16	–	20
3.	Improvement in memory, understanding, ability to grasp	21	3	18
4.	Intellectual improvement in school (for those in school)	4	–	20
5.	Social adaptability	5	6	16
6.	Speech improvement	2	–	21
7.	Control of hyperactive behaviour (in 7 patients on phenobarbitone)	3	1	3

DISCUSSION

The effective management of a child with mental subnormality is a very complex problem and involves not only drug therapy, education training, physiotherapy, etc., for the child but also a lot of parental and community training. Drug therapy has been tried in various ways to improve intellectual function.

In the present study Mentat was used to assess its efficacy in improving the mental faculty of intellectually subnormal children. Assessment of intelligence and finding out the degree of improvement is difficult, but 4-5 parameters were adopted to assess the mental faculty, and thus sources of error were eliminated as far as possible. Six patients on Mentat showed distinct improvement in intellectual function, i.e., a rise in I.Q. of more than 10 points. Three showed some improvement, whereas increased ability to grasp, understand and memorise was seen 22 patients. (2 patients from this group were cases of Down's syndrome – classical trisomy 21).

Improvement in co-ordination was observed in writing patterns after 6 weeks of Mentat therapy. In a "Draw a man" test, improvement in conceptual thinking was evident in the child's ability to draw fingers, toes, hair, genitals etc. In the case of other children the ability to write without intermixing of letters was noticeable after 6 months' therapy (See diagram).

Individuals who were not very sociable showed considerable improvement in behaviour. As regards side effects, no untoward side effects were seen except in one patient of chorea, whose movements increased (Mentat was subsequently discontinued). In another patient who developed increased salivation and gynaecomastia the Mentat dose was reduced with subsequent decrease in side effects. A controlled study on a large number of patients would be necessary to make concrete suggestions about the efficacy of this remedy.

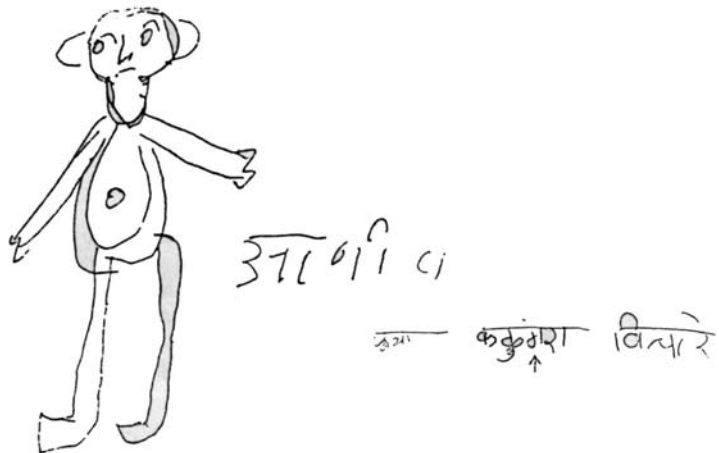
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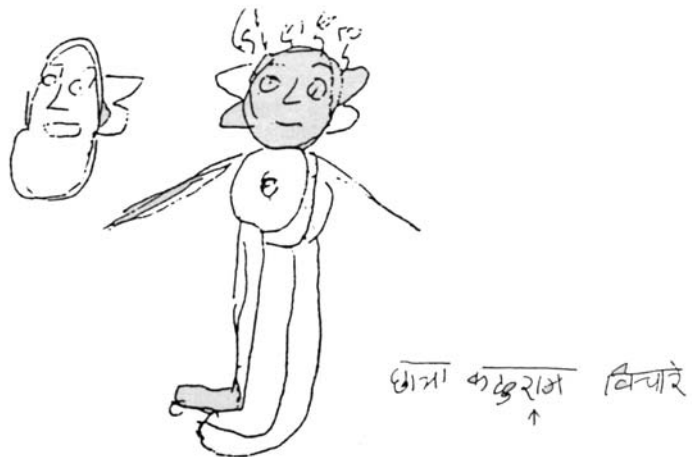
REFERENCE

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BEFORE THERAPY



AFTER SIX WEEKS' THERAPY



NOTE - ABILITY TO WRITE WITHOUT
INTERMIXING OF LETTERS