

A case of lumbago

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Back pain never comes by chance!

Talking about back pain has almost become fashionable.

This pathology is very discussed in scientific world, since it represents one of the most frequent and paralyzing diseases of the population, therefore one of the highest costs for the world health. It often forces people to relax, leave work for some time and even stay in bed for some days. However, over the last years, since lying in bed did not provide a solution, doctors have been advising not to stop, but to keep active, for instance doing gymnastics or proper reeducation.

Thanks to my experience as a kinesiologist first and also as a Mézières practitioner and Posturologist, I had the chance to observe many important data and factors I will share with you. Those aspects are widely considered by Posturology, that "cross branch of medicine" which has tried over the years to develop the knowledge about the relationship between body districts, organs, nervous and muscular systems, teeth, eyes, feet, etc., and our health condition. In one person, in fact, everything is related to everything and any single part (thoughts, emotions, body, body districts, etc.) affects everything!

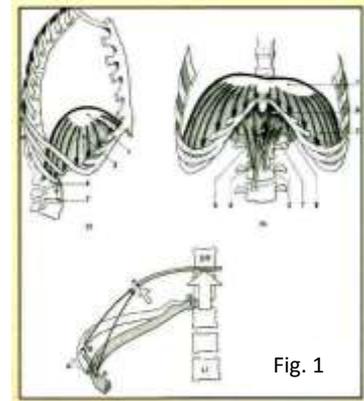
In this article, to be as more concrete as possible talking about back pain, I want to introduce you the real case of Mr. Sergio, a 47-years old Lombard businessman.

The patient explained me that he had stopped thinking that his back pain would have ended alone, since it continued to get worse. The pain began seventeen years earlier and Sergio could not remember why and how it had started, as usually happens. He just remembered very well that somebody told him not to worry, because "as the pain arrived, it would go away". But this never happened.

Then suddenly, asking him to try to remember, he could see in his mind the moment when, exactly seventeen years earlier, he was lifting something at home and felt a sharp stab of pain after which he had to stop for some days. The pain then reduced but never disappeared. Indeed, over the last years it got worse, to the point that in summer Sergio stayed blocked for some days.

The pain was absorbing his whole attention and energy and he could not stand it anymore. It continued also during night, preventing him from sleeping well and waking him up around 2 a.m., so that in the morning he felt tired and tired.

I was trying to understand the linking element between his history and pain, so we looked for the missing information. I found out that he underwent surgery for an appendectomy which had become peritonitis when he was 8 years old. Although the operation succeeded, afterwards he had abdominal cramping for many years. The intestinal problems got worse about twenty years ago, when Sergio hit the chest and the diaphragm (the first muscle used in breathing, situated inside the thoracic cage – see figure 1) in a car accident. From then on, he suffered from breathing difficulty.



Moreover, I connected the time when he used to wake up at night to the liver, according to the principles of Chinese medicine. The connection was confirmed by other signs of suffering at liver level I could see in Sergio's face according to physiognomy. Physiognomic lecture, typical of Chinese medicine, has not diagnostics relevance, but it can be a useful tool to make reflections about the energetic condition of body districts.

Then, when he was 12 years old, Sergio suffered a knee trauma, which required many stitches to be fixed. Such a kind of information is important for a posturologist, since it is known that scars play a fundamental role in the data nervous system collects from the skin. As a matter of fact, in the fetus, skin and nervous system originate from the same matrix, so they remain connected and able to affect one each other all lifelong; it is like what happens between close relatives.

Sergio also told me his energetic level had notably decreased.

Another aspect, which the patient did not consider too much even if he understood the relationship between the two things, was that whenever he ate badly, he immediately felt pain, liver heaviness and an increase in back pain.

The bad condition of his intestine was confirmed by the fact that he did not evacuate every day (as it should happen), but only once every 2-3 days and his breath was bad.

It was important explaining to my patient that each organ of the body has a specific function and it needs to be supported in its work, not leaving it to the chance. Intestine, for instance, should absorb the elements necessary for our survival and throw away every day what is not useful to us. If it is not able to do this, it generates intoxication for the body. It is as if we travelled with garbage in the car. The smell of fermentation and rot would cause intoxication to all people on board. Everybody knows that the fuel that goes in the car must be the proper one, otherwise the car would stop and the engine would be irreparably damaged.

The same happens to the body with food. Some foods seem to be appropriate just because they taste good, but are not really good for our stomach and intestine, since they are not appropriate for our structure and can be dangerous to us.

Going back to the car, the muffler releases the toxic gases as soon as the car produces them, not after two hours or some days. If this did not happen, the engine would stop working and the toxic materials would reach the inside of the car and the driver.

So if we eat something every day, we should evacuate every day, too!

This is a concrete example of how a posturologist could and should educate the patients on how to have a better posture and a healthier life style, through simple but clear explanations.

Back to Sergio, the last thing he told me was that in order to reduce his back pain he usually found himself in apnea and when he released his breathing lumbago tended to increase.

At this point, as a detective, I tried to connect all the pieces of information I had received from the patient and the ones I had collected by observing the patient and listening to his body.

I understood that his back pain, which had started with an old lumbar spasm, had never disappeared, instead it had increased due to the conditioning of a dilated liver, the continue fermentation in his intestine, a tense diaphragm caused by stress and the accident he had when he was 27.



Figure 2

I explained to the patient the connection between a suffering, dilated liver and diaphragm, the first muscle used in breathing. Diaphragm is situated right above the liver, so if the liver is dilated it affects diaphragm in its work, i.e. in no-stop moving for about 14-18 times a day, day and night. This movement requires freedom and space to be done, the total absence of obstacles and breaks such as anxiety, tensions, worries, pain... Otherwise, the diaphragm

gets stiff and blocked over the time. If it happens, part of our health is already compromised, since its movement becomes small, thwarted and insufficient to allow a healthy life. By getting stiff, the muscle gets also shorter, so the diaphragm, which adheres to the lumbar zone of the spine, would create too much tension on the vertebrae, squeezing them one against the other and playing an important role in the appearance of roots compressions, discal protrusions, herniated discs and hiatal hernias.



Figure 3

A diaphragm in these conditions will also affect the breathing, the pumping action of heart towards nervous, venous, lymphatic, digestive system, etc., provoking a big damage to the whole structure.

While I was explaining this information to the patient, I started to treat him, beginning with some maneuvers on his diaphragm. As you can see in the photographs, this maneuver aims to reduce the strong tensions of the diaphragm, forcing it to move up and allowing it to move freely again.

Such maneuvers have to be made with the patient staying in a correct posture, i.e. maintaining specific positions for some time in order to let the muscular chains react and reach a stretching of the whole muscular and fascial system.

In Sergio's case, the tension in the diaphragm was so elevated that it was barely possible to stretch its fibers. After some time the tension became more and more acceptable. Some minutes later his breathing was more free, but what surprised Sergio the most was that the lumbar area started to hurt with a violent and unexpected cramp first, then with a high tension reaching the right side of the column, the right shoulder and the neck in few minutes.

I was happy. These reactions are in fact very important, since they let us understand that we were on the right track.

Almost fifteen minutes later, Sergio exclaimed: "Finally I can let the breath go!" As he stood up, he told me he was feeling much lighter and that the tension and the pain in the lumbar district had reduced by 50%. We agreed to meet for the second session after one week (as it usually happens, sessions are made once a week). According to Sergio, those days were full of optimism and hope, since pain remained fixed at 50% of its initial intensity. By the third session, Sergio almost did not feel back pain anymore, except for some annoyance while doing some gardening on Sundays.

During these sessions, included the fifth and last one, we worked on diaphragm, psoas muscles (which allow the thigh to bend on the chest) and the paravertebral muscles (those running down the spine), always by stretching and not strengthening them. Since those muscles are always too tense, over the years they become shorter and shorter, pressing and squeezing the vertebrae.

Unlike what people generally think, muscles are never too weak, or hypotonic, but hypertonic instead, even if they look thin and make people think they need to be strengthened. The ideal treatment in these cases is to loosen tensions responsible for a lot of problems and musculo-articular pains. The postural technique we use involves the whole body and works on the stretching of the muscular chains, leading to more free articulations and movements.

Another important suggestion I gave Sergio was to improve his diet, as it was too rich in fried foods, sweets and a lot of wine every day. It was not necessary to be a nutritionist or a doctor to understand how important it was to eliminate such foods.

The fifth and last session ended with Sergio feeling very satisfied, not feeling his back pain anymore. When we were finished I suggested him to dedicate some minutes every day to some simple postural exercises, just like cats do by stretching every day and keeping their articulations fit, healthy and flexible for their whole life.

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