

MOST SENSIBLE MANAGEMENT OF ANXIETY AND OTHER PSYCHOLOGICAL COMPLAINTS DURING PREGNANCY

Dr. Vijayalaxmi Vishoyi*

INTRODUCTION

Anxiety is the most common psychiatric symptom in clinical practice and anxiety disorders are the commonest disorders found in 15 to 20 percent of patients. These are more common in industrially advanced countries. Anxiety disorders have harmful effects upon physical and mental health. They also impair functional ability and quality of life. The causes of anxiety in modern life are uncertainty, insecurity, time pressures, relationship problems and fears of inadequacy.

A little anxiety is good in the way that it helps us focus on the task at hand and the body also channels its resources to meet the demands of the job. All of us experience milder forms of anxiety - stress, worry or tension - but when these symptoms collect (or are denied), they can quickly build up to a crescendo. This kind of an anxiety can be severely incapacitating.

People who suffer from anxiety tend to experience physical symptoms such as palpitations, tremors, sweating, gastrointestinal discomfort, diarrhoea, muscle tension, shortness of breath, blushing and confusion. The first step in diagnosing an anxiety disorder is to rule out a physical cause: asthma, diabetes, seizure disorder, inner ear problems and hypothyroidism can all produce symptoms associated with anxiety.

Psychiatric medications treat mental disorders. Sometimes called psychotropic or psychotherapeutic medications, they have changed the lives of people with mental disorders for the better. Many people with mental disorders live fulfilling lives with the help of these medications. Without them, people with mental disorders might suffer serious and disabling symptoms.

* BHMS, MD

Some people have side effects when they start taking these psychiatric medications. Most side effects go away after a few days and often can be managed successfully. People who are taking antipsychotics should not drive until they adjust to their new medication.

Apart from this, anxiety disorders that are quite common in women tend to increase during child-bearing period and pregnancy. Pregnancy appears to be stressful and especially difficult if the mother is anxious, sensitive, nervous, tense or prone to panic sensation or realizations. During this period the woman is more vulnerable and this reduced level of control can add to the perception of stress and anxiety.

The Pregnancy has been regarded as a time of psychological and biological crisis and of emotional upheaval, and as a life event for first-time mothers which initiates a new social role (Thorpe et al., 1992). A more optimistic standpoint views pregnancy as a period that brings marvelous feelings of well-being and psychological strength, while others view it simply as a relatively normal and largely positive developmental experience (Brown, 1979) . Although the individual experience may vary between these extremes, pregnancy has potentially important short- and long-term implications for women's health, well-being and social roles (Striegel Moore et al., 1996).

Since a pregnant woman is the environment for the developing fetus, psychological alterations or even mental disorders may affect the fetus. Given the fact that about 90% of all women become pregnant at least once in their life, it seems highly relevant to investigate psychological changes during pregnancy.

An important and somewhat under-investigated area of inquiry is women's mental health during pregnancy and its impact on the baby.

Although pregnancy is often portrayed as a time of great joy, that's not the reality for all women. At least one in ten pregnant women suffers from bouts of depression.

The modern medicine lacks a holistic approach in its treatment for the anxiety disorders. In spite of various advances, the medicines for anxiety in modern medicine are not curative in nature. A risk of dependency is also associated with them.

Keeping in view the above limitation of modern medicines and the adverse effects of their medications, an attempt was made to show the effectiveness of anti-miasmatic constitutional Homoeopathic medicines to give relief to anxiety patients and there by improving their quality of life.

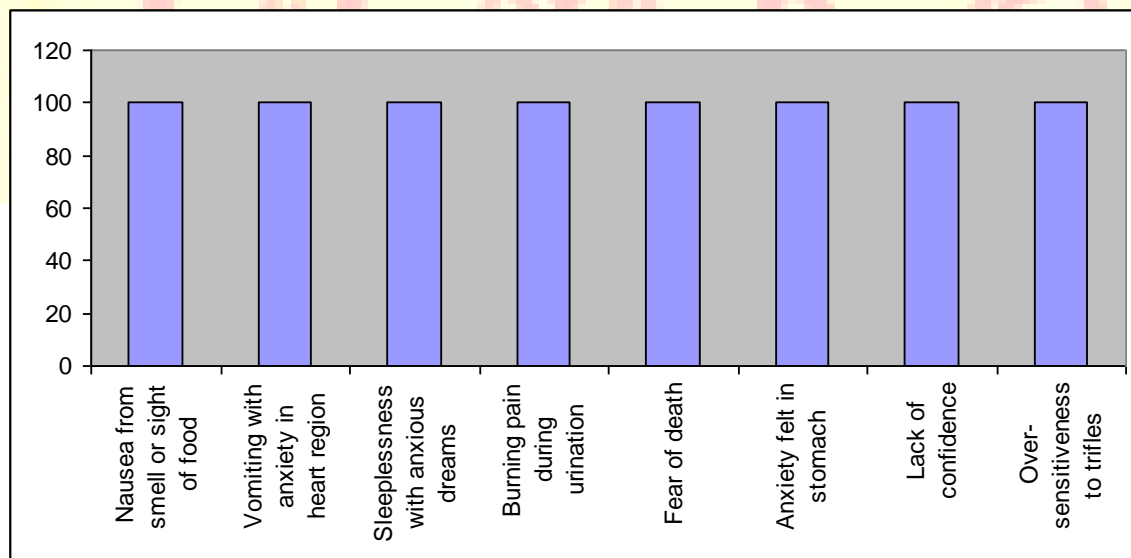
Case – 1

A female aged about 28 came with following complaints on 25/07/2010. She had 10 weeks of pregnancy.

1. Nausea from smell or sight of food
2. Vomiting with anxiety in heart region
3. Sleeplessness with anxious dreams
4. Burning pain during urination
5. Fear of death
6. Anxiety felt in stomach
7. Lack of confidence
8. Over-sensitiveness to trifles

On further investigation the patient had no past history of any heart disease. She had normal functional histories. Blood pressure was 130/86 mm of Hg, pulse rate was 88/min. ECG was normal (already done). The female was a chilly patient and there was desire for coffee.

So from the complaints of the patients it was analyzed that this was a case of anxiety. So taking account into the complaints the patient was prescribed with **Arsenicum album 0/1** (2 oz in liquid form in 16 doses – 1 dose daily in empty stomach in morning). She was advised to take plenty of fluids.



Follow up:

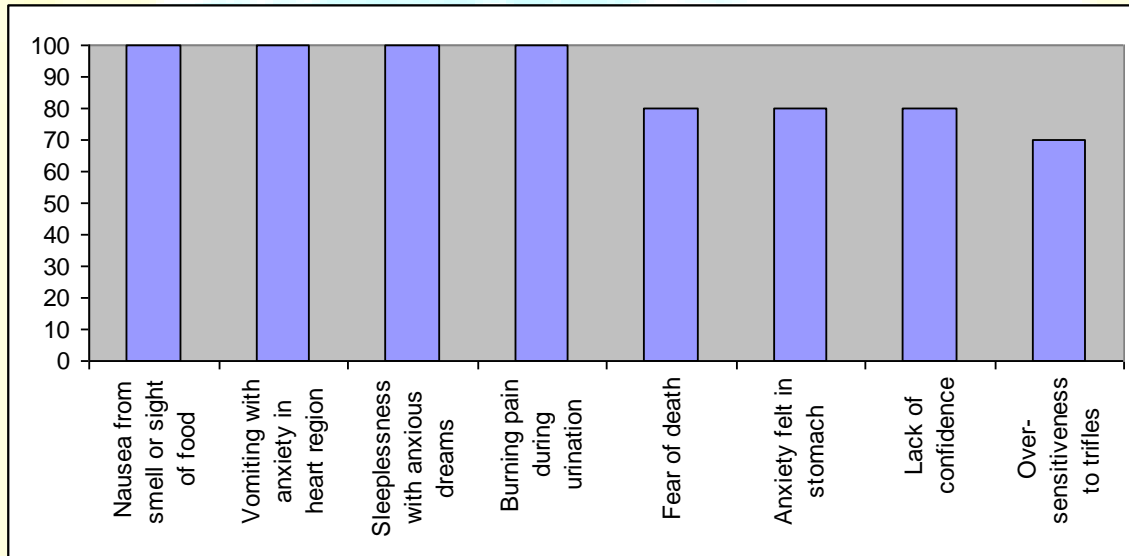
30/07/2010

The patient was feeling better in mental sphere. But the physical symptoms not improving.

Rx

(Repetition of the first prescription)

Ars. alb. 0/1 in same repetition



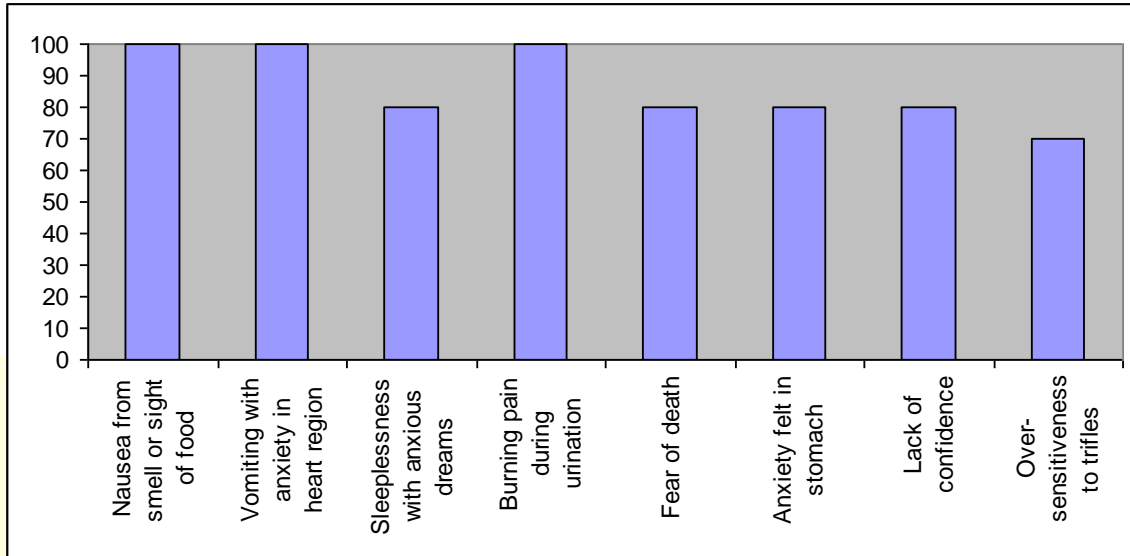
10/08/2010

There was improvement in sleeplessness. But other complaints were standstill.

Rx

Ars. alb. 0/2

2 oz – 16 doses – once daily

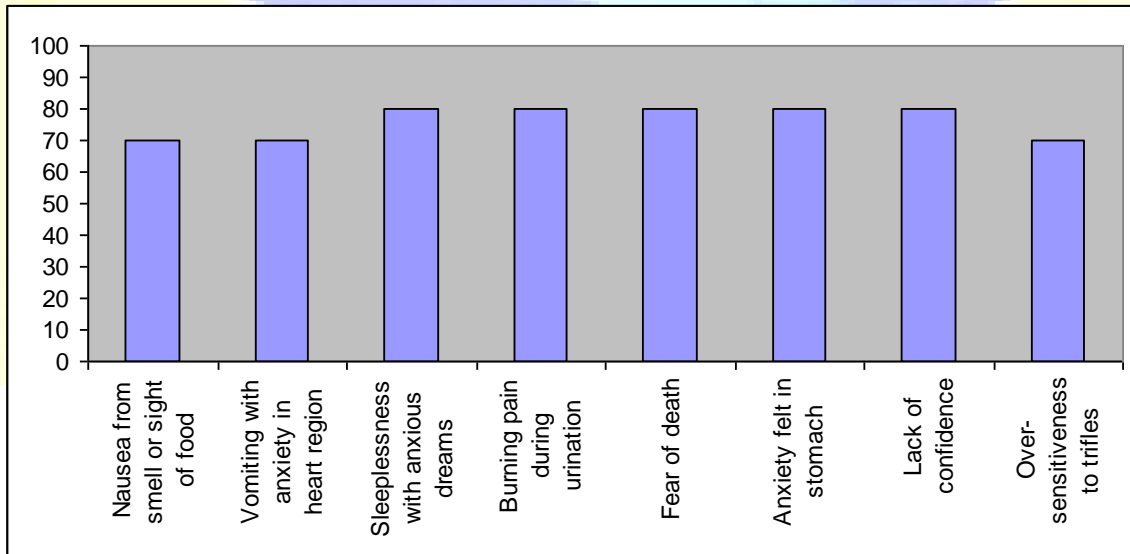


25/08/2010

No further improvement in sleeplessness. Nausea and vomiting reduced. Burning urination reduced. Anxiety symptoms as before.

Rx

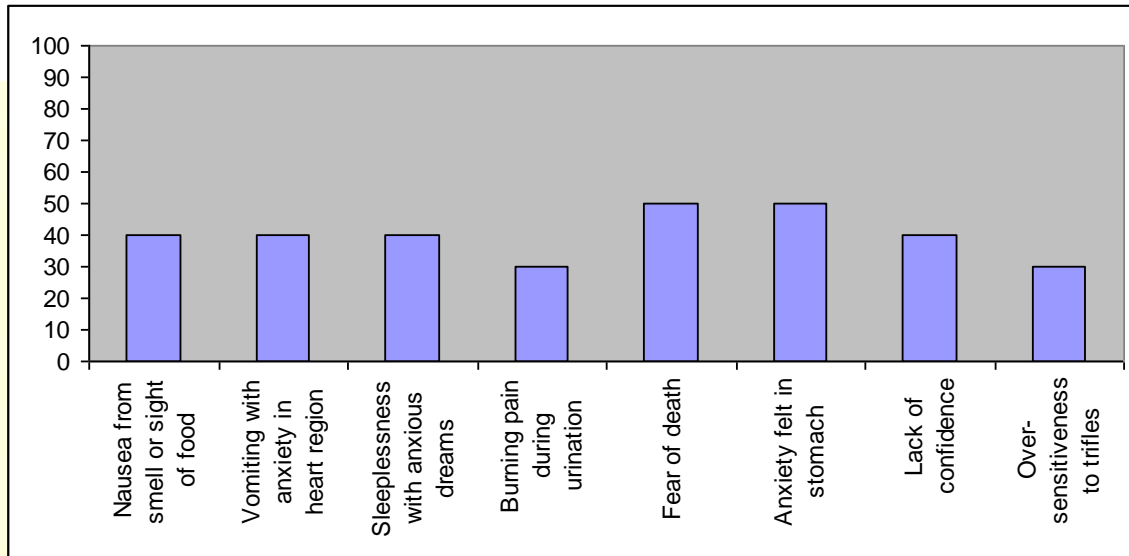
Ars. alb. 0/3



2 oz – 16 doses – once daily

10/09/2010

The patient was improving. There was improvement in anxiety symptoms. The patient was advised to continue the same medicine.



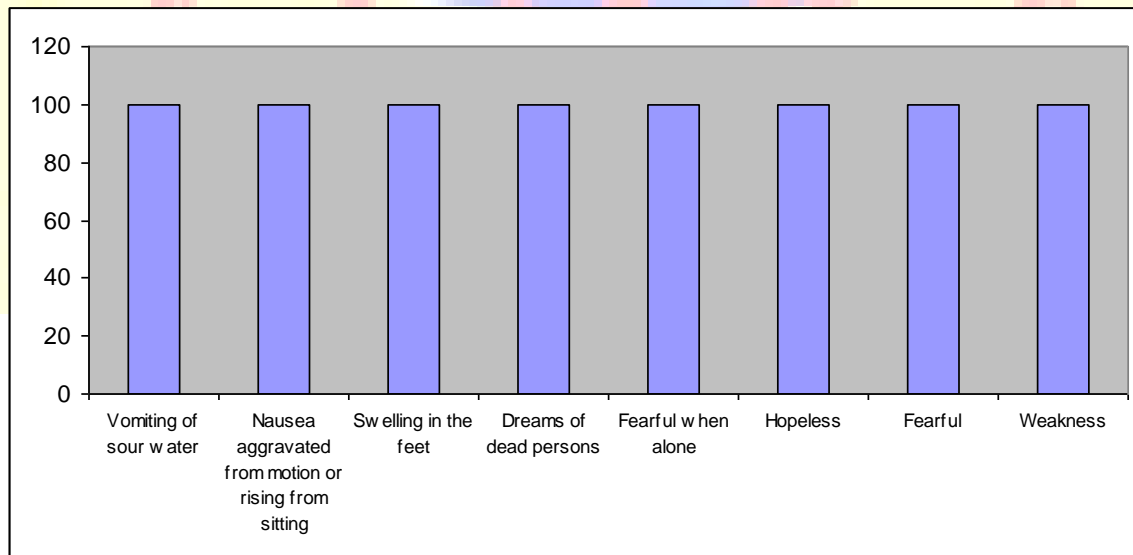
The patient continued the medicine up to 0/6. Almost all the complaints were improving with medicine.

Case – 2

A female aged about 32 having 16 weeks of pregnancy came on 15.8.2010 with the following complaints:

1. Vomiting of sour water
2. Nausea aggravated from motion or rising from sitting
3. Swelling in the feet
4. Dreams of dead persons
5. Fearful when alone
6. Hopeless
7. Fearful
8. Weakness

The patient had no past history of any heart disease and she had the first pregnancy with normal delivery. She had normal functional histories. Blood pressure was 110/80 mm of Hg, pulse rate was 82/min. other investigations were normal (already done). The female was a chilly patient and there was desire for pickles.

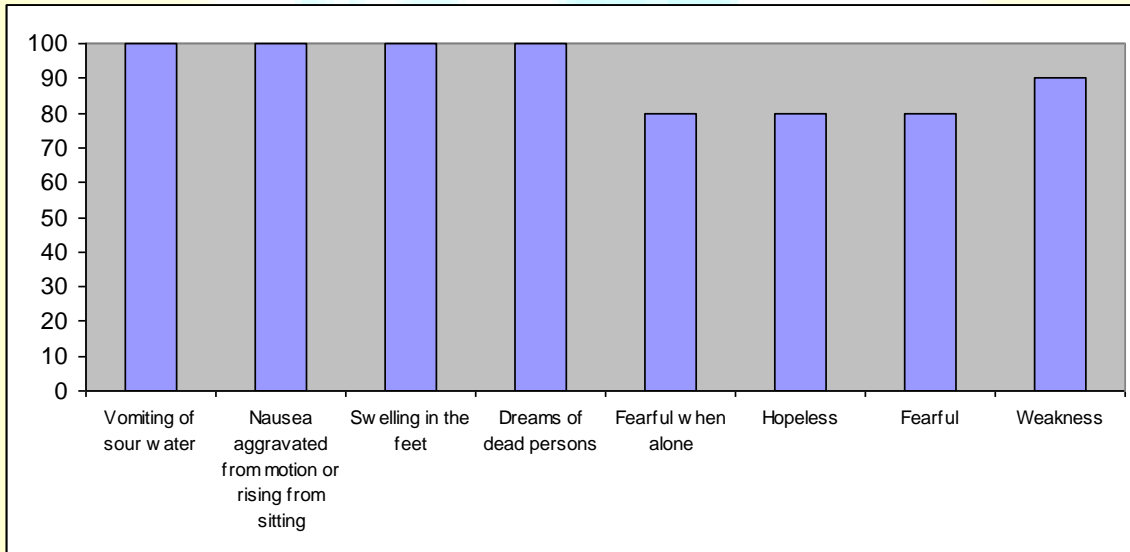


So from the complaints of the patients it was analyzed that this was a case of anxiety. So taking account into the complaints the patient was prescribed with **Arsenicum album 0/1** (2 oz in 16 doses – 1 dose daily in empty stomach in morning). She was advised to take plenty of fluids.

Follow up:

30/08/2010

Anxiety symptoms slightly reduced. No change in Nausea and vomiting. Swelling of feet not changed.



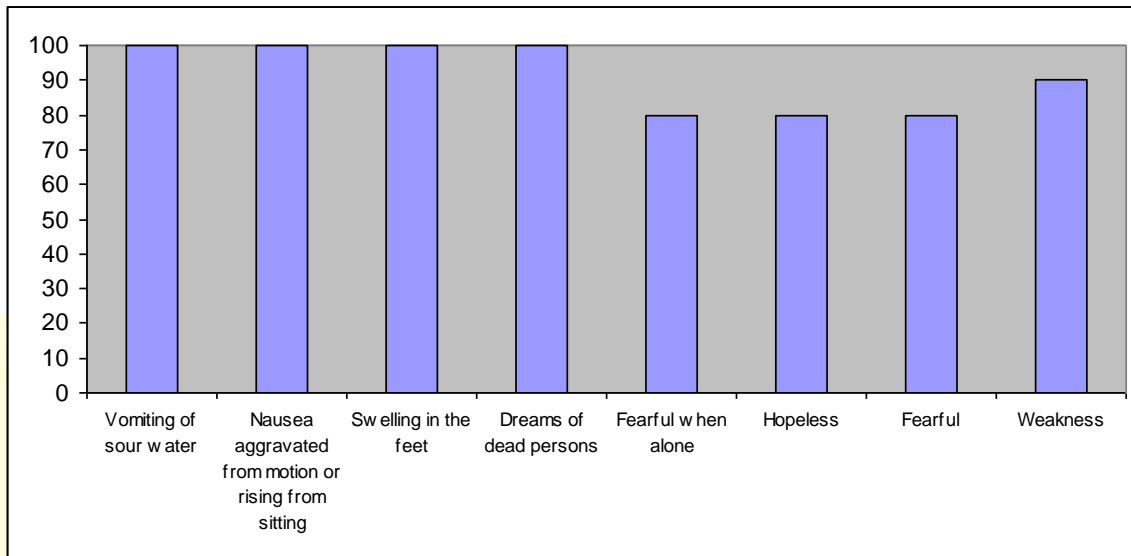
Rx

(Repetition of the first prescription)

Ars. alb. 0/2 in same repetition

15/09/2010

No further improvement in the complaints.



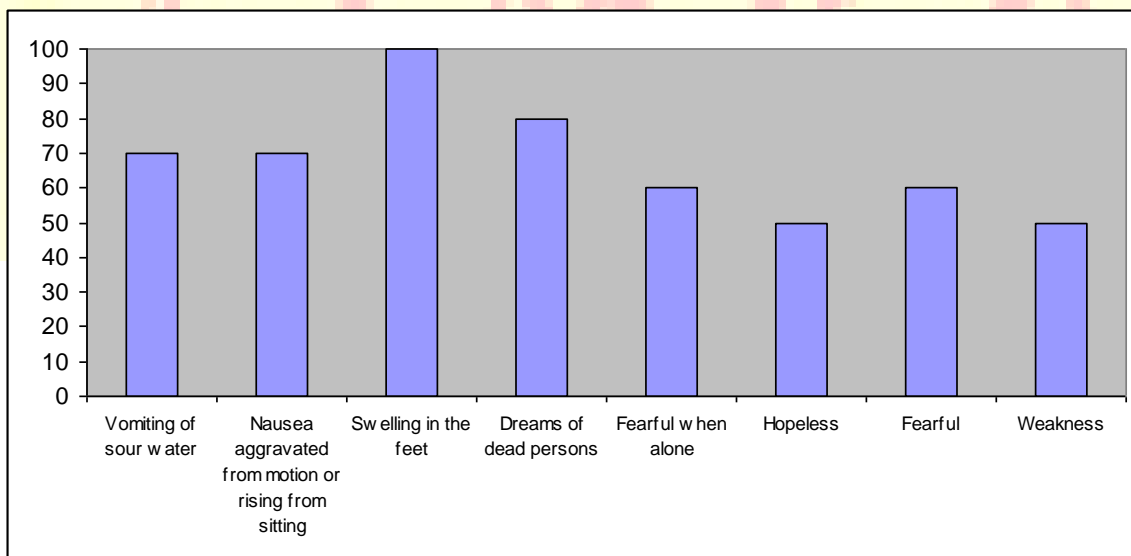
Rx

Ars. alb. 0/3

2 oz – 16 doses – twice daily

4/10/2010

Nausea and vomiting reduced. Swelling of feet as such. Anxiety symptoms reduced.



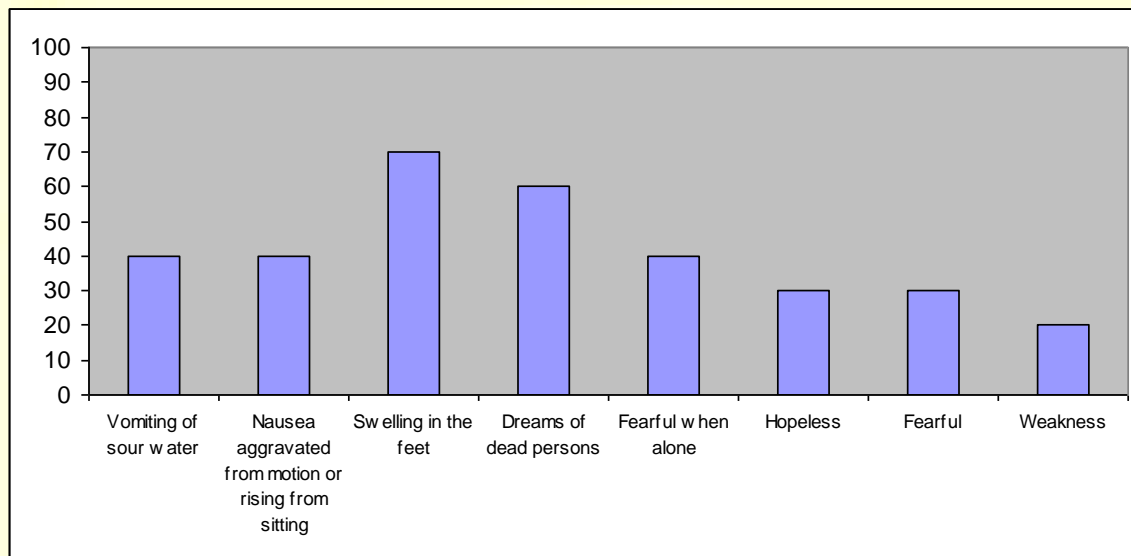
Rx

Ars. alb. 0/4 and 0/5

2 oz – 16 doses – twice daily

10/11/2010

The patient was improving. There was improvement in anxiety symptoms. The patient was advised to continue the same medicine in higher potencies.



CONCLUSION-

Although I have treated the patients with ARS ALB successfully to their best satisfaction, still all patients suffering from anxiety may not certainly require ARS ALB. There are so many other medicines available that which can be prescribed for the treatment of anxiety in an individualistic manner. According to the patients nature, behavior, attitude, habit, past history, personal history, family history, environment etc. specific remedies may be indicated and prescribed for patients. Such selections can only be made by a physician. Therefore medicines may be taken under the guidance of a physician only.