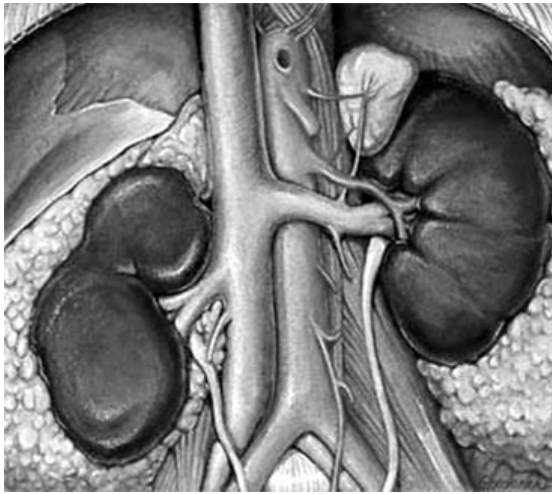


A cure for chronic kidney disease

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Chronic kidney disease (CKD) has been known for decades and has recently assumed alarming proportions in certain areas in the NCP and NWP. Much effort has been expended to determine its likely causes. This includes a project of some four years duration carried out with expertise from the WHO.

Several probable causes have been ascribed from time to time.

These include fertiliser and pesticide residues (specifically cadmium and arsenic), algal toxins, fish consumption, hard water and products of organic decay. Amidst the many controversies, what seems agreed is that some factor in the food chain, most probably from drinking water or food is to blame.

However, it is intriguing that none of the toxic materials, from analysis of blood, urine and tissues of patients is detected in amounts considered damaging in published WHO literature.

Suspect

The most recent collaborative study with WHO is reported to imply that arsenic and cadmium are the prime suspect candidates. Detailed results have not been published yet. Much controversy surrounds the problem as pesticides and fertiliser may be the sources.

The "conspiracy" advocates see the hidden and sinister hand of big business and the bureaucracy behind this while cautious researchers stress the need for incontrovertible scientific evidence before ascribing a cause that may have far-reaching consequences.

While not denying the virtues of precise scientific evidence, it is suggested that when such a widespread and grave health problem surfaces, any method with even the remotest chance of success merits adequate attention.

Tribal dwellers in the upper reaches of the Nile (in Sudan) have for centuries used a method to get rid of turbidity in their drinking water.

The method is broadly as follows: Ripe seeds of the common Murunga (*Moringa oleifera*) are cleaned of their skins and other materials and the white kernels are

pounded as finely as possible. After sieving, the fine powder is transferred to a bottle that can be stoppered (an aerated water bottle should be fine), water added and the bottle shaken vigorously to yield a milky slurry.

This is allowed a while to settle and the supernatant stored for use. A small quantity of the liquid (well shaken again) is mixed with the bulk water and stirred vigorously for about two to five minutes.

This is apparently important to "activate" the active ingredient. This is not unlike the process of "potentiation" practiced in Homoeopathy. After this, the suspension is stirred for another few minutes from time to time and allowed to rest overnight.

The process effectively removes any suspended silt and thus clarifies the water. The process is simple and much cheaper than alum.

Benefit

Obviously, details of appropriate quantities and procedures to be employed for optimum benefit in our particular case will need to be worked out.

The final step may conveniently be carried out in a clay kalagediya (aluminium to be avoided) and the water used for drinking and cooking. There is no mention in the copious literature that any ill effects or off-tastes have been caused by the procedure. It is therefore perfectly safe.

Intensive investigations of the process (including by reputable Universities in the UK) revealed that apart from removing suspended matter, it also cleared the water of a host of inorganic ions (including several heavy metals), bacteria, even viruses and many organic residues.

Interestingly, if one were to search the hundreds (if not thousands) of quoted references, it will be found that every cause ascribed for the local CKD, may be removed by this method.

One thing that is not immediately clear is whether the water needs to be turbid to begin with - the absorption of other compounds being by some kind of co-precipitation.

One known factor is that the active principle from the seed powder is probably an amphoteric, short chain protein. Hence its ability to combine (or adsorb) a range of diverse dispersed materials, carrying either positive, negative or no charge.

Suffice it to say that Africa now has commercial plantations of Murunga (many locals not being aware reportedly, of it as a delectable vegetable) for use even in large Municipal water bodies for purification!