

# Taxus brevifolia: the Western Pacific Yew: Proving and Cured Cases

Steven Olsen, ND, DHANP

This article consists of chapter six of the book, *Arbor Medica: Four New Hahnemannian Provings with Cases*

**Abstract:** This article consists of a proving and several cured cases of *Taxus brevifolia*. Central themes of *Taxus* are found to include: slow to learn, timidity, sleepiness, dissociation from reality. Keynotes for this remedy are: slow to learn to read, falling asleep in church or at school; asthma, worse from eating sweets; a numb feeling in the brain after a grief. Comparisons can be drawn with *Opium*.

**Keywords:** *Taxus brevifolia*, sensorial depression.

## **T**axus brevifolia Western Yew, Pacific Yew

### **The Proving Methodology**

A proving was done with two persons. The provers took three doses of the 30C potency three times a day until symptoms were noticed.

### **Description of *Taxus brevifolia***

Taxaceae, Western Yew, Pacific Yew

*Taxus brevifolia* is an evergreen shrub to small tree up to fifteen meters high. Its general appearance is one of being scraggly, unkempt, and asymmetric. It grows sporadically through the forest. The branches droop, the trunk is often twisted and fluted. The bark is reddish, papery, scaly and shredded. The needles are flat, 2 to 3 centimeters long, dull green above, striped with stomata below, ending in a fine point. They are arranged in rows of flat sprays. Male and female cones are on separate trees. Single, black, bony seeds are almost completely surrounded by a bright-red, fleshy fruit that looks like a red huckleberry with a hole at the end. This red fruit seed covering is poisonous, as are the leaves. The Haifa believed it caused sterility. This tree is known for its tough, resilient wood. It was used for harpoon shafts, root digging sticks, bows, paddles, needles, clubs and wedges.

The shoots and leaves were picked at the end of

December and tinctured in 40 percent alcohol for eight weeks. The scent, like the Douglas fir, is very aromatic. Dolisos Pharmacy made up the 30C potency.

### **Extraction of the Proving Symptoms**

[Quotation marks are omitted. P = prover #]

#### **Mind**

##### **Cloudy Detachment and Isolation**

I feel separated from people, isolated, and indifferent - a feeling of being detached, daydreaming. (P1)

I just want to sit and observe. (P1)

Aversion to talk to people. I wish the customers of my shop would go away. I think they are silly. (P2)

I feel that I am not in reality, like I am asleep in my mind - a dreamy foggy feeling.

My mind feels slow. I want to sleep more and be alone. (P2)

A major effort must be made to pay attention to things. I zone out in conversations. (P1)

My mind is in a haze, and I want to avoid things. (P1)

I am starting to feel the sleepiness again, a fuzzy mind, and a feeling of detachment. (P1)

I found that I made dull responses at work, and I wanted to go to sleep. I feel cloudy, foggy, and a misty

feeling in my mind. Things seem unclear. (P2)

I am still mentally sleepy, cloudy, and have a foggy feeling. (P2)

Two-and-a-half hours later I noted a new symptom: my mind feels fuzzy; I am not able to engage completely in conversation. (P1)

After third dose: headache, continued; mental clarity comes and goes. (P1)

It's very hard to be self-reflective. (P1)

Of note was a feeling of wanting death to come, to release me from the misery of this life. There was a sense that death was "sweet and restful" - a liberation as expressed by the words of the Swan's Song: "Oh death come close mine eyes." Death feels like a sentimental longing. It would be okay to die, to go to sleep and never wake up. (P1)

### **Sleepy with Low Energy**

Not enough energy to joke around. (P1)

I feel I could sleep all the time, or at any time. I want to take more naps. (P1)

At supper I found myself nodding off to sleep. (P2)

Generally tired and more loss of energy. (P2)

I felt extremely sleepy when taking the remedy; this is unusual for me. I kept wanting to nod off. Desire to go to sleep while driving; I was generally more tired. (P2)

All evening I am nodding off to sleep while listening to a lecture. (P2)

### **Irritability With People**

Aversion to having any demands placed on me. (P1)

I found I was not thinking nicely of people. People were demanding too much and I didn't want to answer any questions. (P2)

My body feels uncomfortable. I don't want to be bothered by anything. (P1)

### **Depression**

I feel a down mood, depressed, listless; the whole world is too much. (P1)

### **Slowness of Mind**

Summary of what I experienced:

While taking the remedy, five doses of the 30C, I felt more withdrawn in general. I wanted to be left alone and to be quiet. My mind was in a fog, and my thoughts were unclear. My responses were slow, dull, and I wanted to sleep all the time. (P2)

### **Weak Memory**

I forget what I set out to do. Forget my purpose. (P2)

### **Dreams**

Last night I had two dreams about death:

1) I am in Germany, outside the home of my friend, Tureen. It is night. I am alone. I am somewhat scared, but not of anything in particular. The real and imagined dangers of the night, violent criminals and spirits lurk in the back of my mind. I am trying to find a way into the house. Somehow the house changes into the house of my grandmother, as I am looking for a way in. I manage to open the front door. I climb the stairs. When I get to the top, there is another staircase going down, disappearing into darkness. My grandmother emerges from the darkness; her face is prominent, the rest of her emerging gradually out of darkness. She seems to be clothed in something like a long smock or nightgown. At first I am frightened, but then I say: "Oma, du bist doch tod!" ("Grandmother you are supposed to be dead"). I reach out and with my right hand open, grab her face (the way one palms a basketball) and fling her over my left shoulder. I feel calm at the end of this dream.

2) I am in Australia, in a kind of animal park, with sawdust on the floor for the animals and raised concrete around for people to sit on. There is a large open entrance for the animals. It is draped with a clear plastic curtain. There is a commotion to be heard, coming from beyond the entrance. A woman in a light-green uniform carrying a billy club comes running in, pursued by a bison whose left horn turns down and right horn is turned upward. The bison skewers her in the upper back between the shoulder blades, throwing her frontally against the concrete wall opposite to us. She stands dazed, leaning against the wall, with her right arm up and her left arm down. The billy club seems to be in her belt, but this detail is unclear. The bison backs up toward us as though to take a direct charge at her. I take my briefcase and begin to jab the bison's rump with it, hoping to turn its attention away from the woman. The bison ignores me. Outside, the sound of people shouting in pain can still be heard. The bison charges, and just as it smashes her against the wall, shots ring out from outside and bullets come through the entrance, hitting the bison. The bison falls over, but the woman is hideously crushed, although there is no blood. There is a strong sense that she is dead or dying. She is gasping and convulsing. She is very pale and begins to slide down the wall. People come running in. One person catches her before she falls to the ground. I am horrified, disgusted, and frightened. I wake up. (P1)

Had a dream of newts eating frogs. Another dream: as a teenager fighting, arguing, and tussling with a friend of mine. (P2)

I had a dream of traveling over hills. Car, lawn-

mower, motorcycle. San Francisco. Climbing on a high object over a river, with electrical wires. (P2)

I dreamed I was more overweight than I am. (P2)

Dream of walking downtown in a paralleled street as found in Europe, to purchase a present. I was hiding, obtaining something from a criminal. Hiding out. We went swimming in a deep stream. (P2)

## Head

Headache with throbbing pains. Headache especially in the forehead, inside my mouth, in the sinuses, jaws and glands; better lying down, worse standing up, better from warm drinks. (P2)

Headache across forehead, extending into temples. Headache amelioration on lying down; worse if I sit up, stand up, or get up and move about. (P1)

A small headache persists; better when lying down and worse within two minutes of walking about. (P1)

A slight twinge of pain at the back of the head. (P2)

Dull ache in back of the head. (P2)

4:00 pm: forehead is warm, red, and hot. (P2)

## Vision

For one minute I had blurry vision. (P2)

## Ear

My ears feel cold. (P1)

Ear pains. (P2)

## Face

My face feels cold. (P1)

My face is whiter and paler. (P2)

## Mouth

Slightly thirsty for cold water. (P1)

I noticed a small raised disk, soft and tender, on the roof of my mouth. (P2)

Brief pains in spots on the tongue. (P2)

Mouth more dry, and amelioration from drinking water. (P2)

## Throat

Throat sore and itchy. (P2)

Glands painful. (P2)

Pain in throat, returns from time to time. (P2)

I had less phlegm in my throat than I normally do. (P2)

## Stomach

Flu-like symptoms. Queasiness in stomach. (P1)

As I was preparing my breakfast, I had a wave of nausea. I almost didn't want to eat anything. Everything looked unappetizing. (P1)

Stomach pains and cramps. (P2)

## Stool

Constipated. [old symptom], but worse and more intense than ever. (P2)

Diarrhea today. (P2)

## Female

At end of menstrual cycle a thick yellow discharge appeared. (P2)

A week after this discharge, I had dull pains in the ovaries and uterus. (P2)

One morning, beginning at 6 am, I had stomach pains, cramps and diarrhea. (P2)

## Respiration

I took some pain medication for the headache, and then noticed, as the headache got a lot better, my breathing became a lot worse. I began to have labored breathing and asthma; so I took some asthma medication. I have had mild asthma for the past six months, but this was the worst attack ever. (P2)

Breathing worse after rising. (P2)

Less lung congestion, until I took the painkillers for my headache. (P2)

Asthma, worse from eating sweets. (P2)

## Chest

Pain in both axillae, extending part way down the arms. (P2)

## Back

Stiff shoulders and neck. (P2)

## Extremities

Flitting pains in various joints. (P2)

Throbbing pains under the fingernails. The first nail had been recently injured and the second was injured later. (P2)

Legs, knees, calves, ankles, and soles of feet are all very painful. I feel as if my feet are swollen. Amelioration from walking and warmth. (P2)

Back, hip, and sacral pains radiating downward on the right side only; headache continues. (P2)

Pain in lower back, legs, and feet. Muscles stiff. Pains still radiate. (P2)

Pain in legs is shooting and sharp. (P2)

I had a return of throbbing in the fingers that had been previously injured. (P2)

Pain in both axillae, extending part way down the arms. (P2)

Pain in the left sacroiliac joint, extending to the left hip joint. (P2)

## Sleep

Took a nap at mid-day; this is unusual for me. (P1)

Generally more tired, and I want to sleep. (P1)

Slept very soundly, but woke up feeling tired. (P1)

Woke up faster again; back to normal in this regard. Once I was awake, I was awake. During the time I was influenced by the remedy, I was groggy and slow to wake up. I also feel warmer again; i.e., back to normal. During the time of the remedy, I had a hard time staying warm. (P1)

At supper I found myself nodding off to sleep. All evening I was nodding off to sleep while listening to a lecture; so I went to bed at 9:30 pm. (P2)

I took a nap in the car for fifteen minutes after driving. (P2)

I feel that I am not in reality, like I am asleep in my mind - a dreamy, foggy feeling. My mind feels slow. I want to sleep more and be alone. (P2)

I want to go to bed early. (P2)

### Generalities

Aggravation from eating; better lying down and stretching. (P2)

My face, ears, and upper arms are all cold. (P2)

I felt better when lying down. (P2)

Better from warm drinks. (P2)

I feel a lot chillier. (P2)

### Analysis of the Proving of *Taxus brevifolia*

Although there were only two provers used, there is a considerable amount of valuable information here. Both provers experienced the following symptoms:

- A foggy or fuzzy feeling in the mind that impaired concentration.
- A feeling of not being in reality, detached, not present.
- Headaches that were better from lying down and worse from standing.
- Sleepy feelings during the day.
- Generally feeling withdrawn from a life that was overwhelming.
- A general feeling of being separated and isolated from other people.
- Aversion to external stimulation and interaction with people.
- Generally more chilly than usual.

These symptoms are similar to *Nux moschata*, as it is described in Boericke: "Confused...bewildered sense, as in a dream." It is also like *Opium*: drowsy and sleepiness in the day.

### Cases of *Taxus brevifolia*

#### Case One

Kevin, nine year-old boy

April 30 1997

He suffered from asthma. He was of a slight build, lean, and a bit thin. He took antibiotics and Ventolin. Upper respiratory infections made his asthma symptoms worse (2), as did exertion. At this consultation he had a cough (2) and bronchitis. His nose was sore and crusty inside. (2) He had to take the Ventolin three or four times a day. He suffered from low self esteem (2) and expected a lot of himself. (2) He had a tendency to sit and watch other children play games rather than participate. Learning was difficult for him in most subjects (3); he managed to get 'C' grades with a lot of extra help. He was reading at one grade level below his current grade, three.

**Analysis:** The overall impression he created reminded me of *Silica* in that he was lean, had chronic infections and a timid disposition. I repertorized the following symptoms using the Radar program:

GENERALS: COLD, take cold; tendency to  
 RESPIRATION: ASTHMATIC  
 RESPIRATION: ASTHMATIC, cold, taking, from  
 NOSE: DISCHARGE, crusts, scabs, inside  
 MIND: CONFIDENCE, want of self-confidence  
 MIND: MISTAKES; making, reading, in  
 MIND: READING, difficult, is  
 MIND: STUDYING, difficult  
 MIND: CONCENTRATION, difficult, studying  
 MIND: RESERVED  
 MIND: MILD  
 MIND: QUIET disposition

Repertorization results: *Puls, Sil, Kali-sil, Arg-nit, Cocc, Nux-v, Alum, Stann, Nat-m, Calc-sil, Ph-ac, Bar-iod.*

He was having problems with learning and concentration; he was timid, afraid to join in with the other children, and had a mild character. In addition to *Silica*, this could also indicate *Kali silicata* or *Calcarea silicata*. There were no strong confirmations for any of these remedies; so I looked further. Having recently completed the proving of *Taxus*, I was familiar with its main symptoms, such as reading difficulties, timidity - afraid to 'join in', and asthma.

**Plan:** *Taxus brevifolia* 30C every other day for ten days.

September 27, 1997 (five months later)

"His attention span for reading is a lot longer," said his father.

No more colds; no more asthma. He could play soccer now without taking Ventolin.

He had dry, peeling skin on the palms and also behind the ears.

"My brain works better," he said.

**Analysis:** Correct remedy.

**Plan:** *Taxus brevifolia* 30C one dose every two weeks for two months.

February 18, 1998 (five months later)

He was more confident overall and doing better in school. He could beat his father at chess now. When he lost, he would not cry as he used to. He only rarely had any asthma symptoms. He still had the eruption behind the ears.

**Plan:** Wait.

April, 1998

He developed some seasonal allergies and some asthma symptoms. I gave him *Taxus* 200C, one dose, and he did very well on it.

In December, 1999 he had received an "A" in Math, a "B" in Social Studies and Science, and a "C" in English and French. His asthma, by this time, was very rarely a problem and his father and mother were pleased with how far he had come.

*Taxus* is similar to *Silica* and *Baryta carbonica*.

### Case Two

58 year-old woman

April 30, 1997

During her first visit, she related to me how she had been diagnosed with breast cancer in 1997. She underwent surgery, radiation and chemotherapy.

In 1998 she was given *Taxol* for six months. After this, a number of new symptoms appeared. In effect, she experienced many of the proving symptoms of *Taxus brevifolia*:

Joint pain (2), especially in the knees. (3)

Her mind felt 'blank' (3) - a lack of thoughts.

Memory problems, especially for names. (2)

She became more outgoing, less shy. (curative action)

When I walk, I run out of breath easily.

Bronchial problems in general; chronic cough - worn out from the cough.

Depressive moods.

After trying *Conium* and *Carcinosin* without any benefit, I gave her *Taxus brevifolia* 30C. Her cough got better within a few days; then her mind improved: "I can think more clearly. My mind used to be stuck. I would forget what I was saying; now it is working again. I feel sharp again, alert, at least fifty percent better."

Within the month her hot flushes were also greatly improved. Her hay fever symptoms were also less than they were in the previous year. The shortness of breath (a type of asthma) in general also greatly

improved. She lost six pounds. "I am happier since taking this last remedy. I no longer feel depressed. I feel excellent. I am thrilled that I feel so much better."

### Discussion

This case illustrates that *Taxol*, used as a cancer drug, can cause permanent side-effects. These side-effects are the same as the proving symptoms; such as, asthma, difficulty in thinking, timidity, and joint pain. *Taxus brevifolia*, in a potentized form, is able to reverse these negative effects.

### Case Three

D.C., a 55 year-old widow, had six children.

April, 1994

I first saw her on April 28, 1994. This was two years before the proving of the Yew tree.

"I have insomnia (2); my mind is racing and wide-awake. Every night I have nightmares that wake me up. (3) My heart pounds (2), then I can't get back to sleep.

"Generally I go to sleep, then after one hour I wake up from the nightmare, with nausea (1), palpitations (2), my head swirling (2), and both ears ringing. (2) I have dreams of being chased. If I lie still, then I feel better, but after I sleep for awhile I wake up again. The whole pattern can repeat itself six or seven times a night.

"The sleeping problems started a year ago, in September, 1992, when my daughter broke up with her husband. She had four children, and I was very worried about the children.

"In general I can't relax (2). I have financial problems.

"The ringing and buzzing in my ears is constant, and worse in the right ear. (2)

"I have a sensation of pressure in the forehead, worse from moving my eyes from side to side. (1)

"In June, 1993, I had a coronary thrombosis. In September of that year I had coronary bypass surgery. Now I worry about my heart. I have a fear I will have another heart attack; this stops me from enjoying my life.

"At night I take one-half of an Ativan.

"In general I feel breathless. I sigh and yawn, but I feel I can't get enough air into my lungs (2)."

Frequent urination at night. (2)

"I have grief since I lost my husband seventeen years ago. I also lost a daughter to AIDS. I feel close to my family. (2) I have three daughters and three sons. I especially worry about my children. (2) I feel homesick easily (2)."

No headaches.

Fear of heights (2). Foggy thinking. (2).

Always chilly;(2) she liked to be warm.

She was not overly neat. Her thirst was average.

She had jumpy legs at night (2), worse when sleepy and worse when anxious.(2)

**Analysis:** She was generally a nervous person; also sympathetic and overly concerned for others. Other characteristics: quiet, attentive, frightened, sensitive, mild and timid. I considered giving her *Arsenicum album*, *Phosphorus*, *Silica*, *Causticum*, *Carcinosin* and *Cocculus*. None of these I could confirm to my satisfaction.

**Plan:** The first remedy that I gave was *Carbo animalis* 30C every three days for a month. It was listed for: waking with a fright, waking with palpitations, homesickness, chilliness, timidity grief, and ringing in the ears.

*One month later (May 31, 1994)*

She was no better. She was now taking an antidepressant called Trazadone, and she had stopped the Ativan. She still had all the symptoms listed above; such as, ringing in the ears, unclear thinking. She also had premonitions of death (2); they hit her in the pit of her stomach.

Her heart would at times pump hard, at which time she also felt vertigo.(1)

She was afraid to go to bed at night because of all the nightmares she was having.

Gritty, dry eyes. Low back pain.

"For awhile I was using credit cards when I knew I could not pay them."

"I don't need a lot of entertainment. I am a quiet type of person. I have good friends. I am not shy, but I am not outgoing."

Her nails were strong.

"I am especially worried about my grandchildren." (2)

Urinary incontinence when coughing or sneezing. She had no joint pain.

"I misplace things and then can't find them." (2)

**Analysis:** *Carbo animalis* was incorrect. There were a number of leading symptoms for *Causticum*: anxiety for others, jumpy legs at night, loss of urine from coughing, and chilliness.

**Repertorization:** In all the cases presented in this book I used the Radar program. I have used this method of repertorization for the past eight years with almost every case and find it extremely useful.

The following repertorization used the Vithoulkas Expert System. These were the results:

"Help in Prescribing

So far the best probability is Nat-m. 209.4 (confi-

dence rating 73 points)

#### Help in Interrogation

Also ask questions about lyc., caust., calc., and cocc.

This analysis contains 15 single symptoms and compares patterns of 401 remedies.

#### Large Remedies

nat-m.

lyc.

caust.

calc.

cocc.

ign.

hyos.

bell.

phos.

ph-ac.

bry.

nat-c.

puls.

nit-ac.

carb-an.

alum.

#### Medium Remedies

carc.

kali-sil.

aur-s.

carl.

nat-ar.

calc-sil.

aur-ar.

ars-s-f.

bars.

m-arct.

alum-sil.

alum-p.

nat-sil.

puls-n.

aur-i.

am-caust.

#### Small Remedies

hydrog.

androc.

sol-o.

cit-ac.

dat-m.

onop.

tarent-c.

adon.

mit.

choc.

limest-b.  
iris-t.  
sacch-l.  
cael.  
lob-c.  
ergot."

One can see the most likely choice is *Natrum muriaticum*. I could confirm neither *Natrum muriaticum* nor *Lycopodium*. The next most likely remedy was *Causticum* and this I gave in a 30 K potency, one dose every two days for ten days, then every three days for three weeks.

*Eight months later (March 1, 1995)*

She was off Trazadone now. "I was concerned about taking the *Causticum* and Trazadone at the same time; so I only started the *Causticum* one month ago. I feel more relaxed since starting it. My confidence is a little better."

Sleep was better, and her dreams were not as bad. She was dreaming of rats and lizards coming out of a hole, or of an elephant chasing her.

She was still living in a constant state of fear and generally felt insecure. She was learning to control her spending.

The ringing in her ears was better for a time.

She still did not have the confidence to go out square dancing; she felt too self-conscious.

Overall her foggy thinking was better. Her legs were still jumpy at night, especially the left leg (2), worse when she was tired.

Her vitality was better overall. (2)

As a child she felt she did not get much attention from her parents; it seemed a type of neglect.

**Analysis:** The remedy had some positive effects; so I decided it might be the correct remedy.

**Plan:** Continue *Causticum* 30K every three days for six weeks.

*Ten months later (February 28, 1996)*

She started the remedy one month ago, and it made her feel worse this time. The anxiety got worse and her sleep became worse again. Last night her mood changed and she slept very well. There were not as many palpitations. The ringing in her ears was a lot less. Her dreams were not as bad. Her legs were less jumpy last night. There was no urine loss when she coughed or sneezed.

**Analysis:** I believed the *Causticum* was having some positive effects; so I decided to give it to her once a week for a month.

*A week later (March 6, 1996)*

She couldn't sleep at all; she had been wide

awake with anxiety. Her left leg was very restless and always cold.

She was having low moods and depression. (2) She wanted people to be on time and was very anxious and irritable if they were late. (2) When anxious, she felt very alone and out of reality. (2)

Aggravation from sitting in the sun. (2)

She was sensitive to criticism. (2) "I feel insecure. I have low self-esteem. I am not good enough. (2) I feel so bad when I make a mistake at something; that is why I stopped square dancing."

She still owed two thousand dollars on her credit cards. Anxiety over her finances. (2)

**Analysis:** Due to her depression, grief, sense of aloneness, and sensitivity to the sun, I decided to give her *Aurum muriaticum* 30K every three days for three weeks.

*Five weeks later (April 15, 1996)*

"I feel better; I am sleeping better. I still have bad dreams that wake me up with a jolt. I dream of a child falling into the water; an adult jumps into the water to save him, but then knocks a second child into the water. The second child dies."

She could fall asleep more easily. (2) Her depression and anxiety were reduced by ten percent.

"I am anxious - like I feel I am unreal, like I feel I will die; then I want to get rid of things that I own but that I don't use, such as pots and pans and books. When I am in a down mood, I lose interest in things and I fear that I won't be able to cope; then I feel I should sell my house as it is too much responsibility."

"I still have low self-esteem. (2) I just can't do certain things; I feel too self-conscious and fear that I will make a mistake."

She liked potatoes and felt no fear when looking at a knife.

There was less ringing and buzzing in her ears.

Sleepiness in the daytime (2); such as, when talking to people, at a lecture, or at church. (2)

She still had jumpy legs at night.

She had stopped all antidepressants.

"I feel that all my symptoms started when my son's and daughter's marriages broke up five years ago. This was an unbelievable situation to me; it seemed unreal that all this was happening. Then I was spending all that money that I didn't have; this also made me feel as if I were not in reality. When I get the anxiety, then I feel that things are not real."

**Analysis:** Although the *Aurum muriaticum* seemed to help some symptoms, it did not help the totality of the symptoms. By this time, I had done the proving of *Taxus brevifolia*.

The pattern that I saw in this person was: foggy thinking, feeling of being alone and withdrawn, sleepy in the daytime.

**Plan:** *Taxus brevifolia* 30C every two days for ten days, and then every three days for three weeks.

*Five weeks later (May 23, 1996)*

"I feel a lot better. The anxiety attacks are less.(2) My sleep is better (2). Things don't feel as unreal now; this is one hundred percent better."

Her mind was not racing at night now.

"I still have a lack of confidence. I'm not as worried about my grandchildren now."

She was no longer sleepy in the daytime now. Her jumpy legs stopped, and then only came on when she had some anxiety. The anxiety was ninety percent better.

"I am able to say 'no' more easily."

**Analysis:** Possibly correct remedy.

**Plan:** Continue *Taxus brevifolia* 30C every three days for a month.

*Almost three months later (August 15, 1996)*

"I stopped the remedy for a month, then the anxiety started to return. The depression is still better. My confidence is also a little better. Overall, I still feel more relaxed, not so worried about things."

She was still not so sleepy in the daytime, although she did still have jumpy legs at night, especially the left leg.

She suffered a detached retina that was slow to heal after an operation.

The ringing in her ears was still a lot better.

**Analysis:** Correct remedy.

**Plan:** Continue *Taxus brevifolia* 30C every three days.

*September 24, 1996*

There was no anxiety now and no more nightmares. "I am sleeping well in general. I am not sleepy in the day now. My general health feels better; my confidence is better. I feel like a new person."

Her jumpy legs were better, and her detached retina was better.

**Analysis:** Correct remedy.

**Plan:** *Taxus brevifolia* as needed.

*November, 1996*

"I now sleep well and have overcome my anxiety and panic attacks. I am grateful for this experience with homeopathy."

*January, 1997 (eight months since starting the remedy)*

Still no anxiety or nightmares. She had another operation for the detached retina, but did not heal well from this operation and still has some vision problems. Overall, however, the remedy worked well.

#### **Case Four**

L.W., 49 year-old father of four children

*April 22, 1996*

Stomach sick, nausea (2), vertigo (2), urging for a bowel movement (2) - this had been happening every day for a few years., aggravated by eating oily foods.

He had had asthma for fifteen years and used Ventolin three times a day. The asthma was aggravated when in the city (from pollution), from cold weather, exertion, from fresh cut grass, from eating sweets, or if his nerves were upset.

Pains in the left hip.

"I feel grief from the loss of my mother six months ago. I had to look after her. I only got a few hours sleep every night as I was so worried about her all the time. At this time I lost my ability to concentrate and became more dizzy.(2) My mind is still foggy from this experience.

"The muscles of my legs feel weak.(1) I'm tired all the time; I have no energy.(2)

"I am upset easily; I can't remember things (2); then I get mad at myself.(1) I can't seem to do things; I feel vague and sleepy.(2)

"I have not had a lot of education. I can't seem to read a book; I need a pencil to follow the lines.(1) At school I failed grades two and four. I was very slow to learn.

"There is thick fungus in my toenails.

"I have good friends. I am a mild and quiet person and very empathetic. I prefer to be with people.

"I have a fear of mice and rats, snakes, and to be alone.

"I feel sensitive if people are mean to me. I remember my father would hit me at times.

"If I study, I get tired very easily (2), then I get sleepy.(2) I feel very sleepy when I go to church.(2)

"My ears ring (2), and I can't hear very well." No ear infections.

He was sensitive to cold (3), liked warmth.(2)

He took two or three drinks a day.

"I lose touch with what is going on when there are a lot of people in the room who are all talking. I can't seem to pay attention (2), and then I get quiet.

"I lose things easily.

"I would rather be told what to do, as I find it difficult to get my own thoughts organized.

"I get ashamed of things easily, such as my father's

drinking problem; then I get introverted and quiet inside.

"I like to have good friends over for dinner, but then I slowly became more isolated when I had to look after my mother.

"I get up early, but I am tired all day. I try to keep going as there is a lot of work to do.(2)

I have low confidence (2); I don't seem to measure up to others (2)."

Worse from lying in the sun.

**Analysis:** The important symptoms of this case were as follows:

- the mental slowness
- inability to concentrate
- aggravation from noisy crowds
- anxiety for family
- ringing in the ears
- sensitivity to cold
- ashamed easily
- sleepiness in the daytime
- sleepiness during church
- lack of confidence .

**Plan:** *Taxus brevifolia* 30C every two days for ten days, and then every three days for three weeks.

*Two weeks later (May 6, 1996)*

His asthma was better by twenty percent; mood better by fifty percent.

His anxiety was diminished, his thoughts more organized, and his thinking was more clear. He was able to make decisions more easily now, and he felt more at ease in general.

**Analysis:** Correct prescription.

**Plan:** Continue *Taxus brevifolia* 30C every three days for three weeks.

*One month later (June 10, 1996)*

He had been off the remedy for two weeks. His legs, right shoulder, and right wrist were painful.(2) The leg pains were especially worse after sitting.(2)

His outlook on life was better. His asthma was better by eighty percent; he no longer required his Ventolin now. His stomach also felt better.(2)

"My mind works better; I can think more clearly.(2)

He was not so depressed (2), nor so worried about things (2).

The nausea returned again after stopping the remedy.

There was much less vertigo overall.

"I am more confident; now I just go ahead and do things. I am able to sleep better at night.(2) I can sleep up to six hours now and feel less sleepiness in the day. I have more ambition to do things.

"The ringing in my ears is less (1); my hearing is

better when in a crowd.(2)

"I have less feeling of not belonging. I feel more at ease with people.(1)

"I feel when I do things that I might be right; before when I did things, I always felt I was doing it wrong. I am going out and doing more things, spending more time with people, and feeling more confident in general."

**Analysis:** Correct remedy.

**Plan:** *Taxus brevifolia* 30C every three days for a month.

*September 1996*

This patient did not want to continue treatment and said he would contact me if he needed anything further. He stopped the remedy and has not relapsed. Even though no additional data is available from further follow-ups, I feel this case is worthy of presentation because the totality of the symptoms improved in such a dramatic way.

### Case Five

Eileen; 51 year-old woman.

*August 2, 2004*

After a hysterectomy for fibroids in 1987 she developed many of her present symptoms, including: back pains extending into her neck, a sensation of too much blood racing through her body, sleep difficulties, and a general 'zombie'-like state of mind. The several doctors she consulted were unable to help her. She had been taking Paxil for the preceding two years.

She presented with a staring and anxious expression. She was slow to express herself and her expression was slow and vague at times.

Aching in the joints, arms, knees, and arches of the feet. The back of her heels were in chronic pain, especially when she started to walk; better with continued motion. "The tissues of my body all feel too tight.(2) I used to get a lot of cramps in my legs; this was better if I stood on cold cement." In general she was worse from heat and preferred a cold atmosphere. She had some hot flushes.(2) She was no longer taking estrogen.

She found it very difficult to get to sleep.(2)

"If I do not take Paxil, then I stare at people too much; they then get uncomfortable, and then I feel uncomfortable. It feels like at these times I am in a 'nothing place,' or in another world. It is a numb feeling in my brain; my mind is too slow; my memory fails me.(3) I feel confused and like a retarded person. This all began after the pains from my back went up into my head. At work I have an assembly job. Every few months I have to be retrained as I forget what to do. I smoke cigarettes; I keep trying to quit. I have no

sexual energy; this was even low before the hysterectomy. I love my husband very much though. My father had pancreatic cancer and liver cancer; my mother had breast cancer. My grandmother died of ovarian cancer."

Her menses were very heavy and began when she was ten years old. There was clotting, cramping, and much pain with them. After the menses there was a lot of creamy discharge for which she had to wear a pad.

"Since the hysterectomy I don't cry, but I still feel depressed (2) and anxious.(2) I feel unworthy, like I am not good enough. I can't seem to do anything well enough. I feel like a failure, but this is not logical as I work all day. I feel guilt feelings over small things which are overpowering (3); this comes with a feeling of panic (2) and fear.(2) I try to do things for others all the time to get rid of this feeling. I feel like I will get into trouble over something that I do. My mother used to shame me often. As a child I felt guilty for everything. I would blame myself easily; now I feel I could cry about this. People don't like to be with me as I stare at them and make them feel uncomfortable. They think I can see through them, but I can't. As a child I felt a lack of self-esteem.(2)

"My mother was 18 years old when she had me; she was not mature and she could not help me or teach me how to be a woman. I am angry about this. I was very shy as a child and timid.(2) I used to constantly tap my feet; this was a way to act out.(2) As a teen I had a lot of nervous energy; I was always busy, talking a lot about nothing and singing all the time.(2) So I was put into the dumb side of the class; I always needed help. My two brothers and one sister also have learning disabilities. I have to be re-taught things over and over again. I had a hard time learning to read (2); my memory was poor. I would sleep in class (2), but then I could not sleep at night.(2)

"If people argue around me, I get very anxious and start to wring my hands.(2) I forget everything I want to say if people start a debate or argue.

"I have a horrible feeling of being alone. I feel like the loneliest person on earth.

"I had no emotion over my father's illness (2).

"I will feel dizzy if I look at a train. My vision is blurry.(2) Sometimes I get headaches and nausea.(2)"

Sensation of sand in her eyes.

ringing in her ears every day.(2) Dry mouth (2).

Bumps on her palate behind her front teeth.

Constipation in the past. She also had asthma in the past, for which she took medicine.

Cold hands, especially the finger tips.(2) She had recently had carpal tunnel surgery.

Her whole body felt restless with anxiety. Rest-

lessness of the lower limbs just before sleep; she couldn't relax and felt short of breath. This tension could last all night.

She had nightmares as a child of branches drying up, claw-like branches, "as if my bones were drying up." She had no memory of her dreams now.

"I can't hear what people say when I am in a room with other people speaking."

"When I feel anxiety, I lose touch with reality, and then I do not feel present - I feel divided and unreal. Sometimes I wake up in a panic with palpitations of my heart. My mind races at night. I can't try to do new things.(2) I am not assertive at all. I startle easily (3). I have a sympathetic nature."

**Analysis:** This patient displayed the following symptoms which are listed in the original proving of *Taxus brevifolia*: A sense of being detached, zoned out, and isolated from others. Foggy mind, sleepy in the daytime, slow to learn. Depression. Swollen disc on the roof of the mouth. Asthma worse from eating sweets. Slow mind. A thick, yellow discharge at the end of the menses. Inability to listen to others when in a crowded room with others speaking.

She was similar to the other cases of *Taxus* in that: she was reserved and timid; she experienced ringing in the ears; her mind raced at night; she experienced anxiety at night which prevented sleep, caused waking at night with nightmares and palpitations; she lacked confidence, found it difficult to learn to read and felt isolated.

Based on this information I gave her *Taxus brevifolia* 30C one dose.

*One week later*

"Generally I feel much, much better in all ways.(2) I now feel in control of myself. I haven't over-reacted. I am now able to cry over the illness of my father; before I could not feel anything about this. I quit Paxil and feel no mood swings or depression. I have no more back, neck, or head pain. There is no more sensation of blood racing through my body. Only one time for half an hour did I feel like a zombie. On the second day after the remedy I had a bad headache on the left side of my head. There is no longer a cloudy feeling in my head; my brain feels more clear. I am able to think things through; so I feel proud of myself now. This medicine feels like home for me. The pains in the upper arm, elbows, and left knee are all feeling a seventy percent better. The pain in the arch of the left foot, though, is the same. The hot flashes are the same. It still takes me one half-hour to two hours to fall asleep. There is no longer a numb feeling in my head. My memory feels better; I am now able to remember other people's names. I feel more confident, no longer feeling like

a failure. My children are no longer avoiding me; they even come up and give me hugs now. I used to push people away, but I no longer do this. I feel no guilt and no panic and no sense of being overpowered. No more headaches from reading and my concentration when reading is much improved. I no longer feel so alone. My blurry vision is better too."

**Analysis:** Correct remedy.

**Plan:** Repeat remedy when symptoms start to relapse.

#### *One month later*

"I know when I need the remedy and then I take it. I feel good emotionally. My mind feels one hundred percent better. In the past I could not function. I was dizzy. I was a danger to myself. I could not operate the machinery at work; I could not stay focused. Now I like my job and I am able to stay on top of it. I now know what I am doing. My memory is better. I feel good now that I am able to do my job. My thinking is clear.

"I have no panic attacks or anxiety. My ears still ring. (2) When I had the flu, my legs were restless. I feel that I can connect to people better. My sex drive is better and I can enjoy sex now; in the past I felt nothing."

**Analysis:** Correct remedy.

**Plan:** *Taxus* 200C when symptoms relapse.

#### *Four months later (December 2004)*

"My joints ache from the cold weather. My ears ring now only if I am under some stress. I no longer feel vertigo when I stand up. My sleep is excellent now. My emotions feel calm. My confidence is low in certain situations; so I avoid those situations. I feel more confident about people whom I know well. I am not so self-conscious. In general I feel great. I still have terrible hot flashes though.

#### *Three months later*

"The joints are eighty percent better. The guilt feelings are ninety-five percent better. The mental confusion is sixty percent better. Overall I am more busy and involved with life. I can connect more easily with other people. I can remember now what I read. (2) I feel less sleepy in the daytime. I still have ringing in the ears. My legs are not restless any longer."

#### *Six months later*

She was still doing well. Her sleep was good. She was, though, still having hot flashes and tinnitus. She worked in a very noisy environment.

**Plan:** Take remedy as needed.

## The Materia Medica of *Taxus brevifolia*

"Make not your rosary of yew-berries, ...  
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,  
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul."

John Keats, "Ode On Melancholy" (1819), lines 5,9 and 10.

### Mind

The mind is sleepy, easily disorganized, slow to learn and forgetful. He wants to sleep often during the day. He falls asleep at church or at a lecture (*Op*, *Nux-m*). Impaired concentration, especially when people are speaking in a group and inability to understand what others are saying. The motivation is impaired and little is accomplished. The confusion is better from walking and eating. Forgets what he ought to do - the mind is blank. Difficulty learning to read; might only learn the most basic reading skills.

Anxiety that produces a feeling of not being in reality, detached and not present. A shock makes her feel things are unreal. Anxiety and worry over a long period of time. Anxiety prevents sleep. Anxiety leaves her feeling separate from reality. Panic attacks that keep her awake or wake her up at night. Wakes with frightful dreams, palpitations, and ringing in the ears.

Grief, depression and sadness. Numb with depression; can't feel or think clearly since loss of a family member.

Meek, timid, mild, and insecure people. Easily frightened, feels ashamed and unworthy.

Won't try new things for fear of making a mistake. Questions her own abilities. She feels self-conscious and inferior to others. She feels separated from people, withdrawn and isolated. Aversion to conversation; thinks what she says is silly, and can't understand what others are saying. Just wants to sit and observe.

Fear of something bad happening, having another heart attack, something going wrong.

Feels an acceptance of death and welcomes it with a sentimental longing. Dreams of dead relatives, being chased, and vicious animals who attack and kill.

Life seems overwhelming; fear of responsibilities.

Aversion to company and external stimulation, or any interaction that would produce a confrontation. Difficult to be assertive and say "no" to others (*Carcinosin*, *Magnesia muriatica*, *Silica*). Sensitivity to criticism.

Anxiety for her family. Conscientious. Very tired, but tries to do things all day at home.

### Vertigo

Vertigo, light-headed. (*Cocculus*)

### Head

Headaches, which are better from lying down and worse from standing or moving about. A pressure feeling in the head.

### Eyes

Dry, gritty eyes. Dry mouth, amelioration from drinking water.

### Ears

Ringing or buzzing in the ears.

### Mouth

A raised disc, soft and tender, on the palate.

### Respiration

Breathless on exertion. Asthma.

### Stomach

Stomach pains and diarrhea. Constipation.

### Urination

Urination often at night, with burning in the urethra.

### Female Genitalia

Thick, yellow vaginal discharge after the menses.

### Back

Back pains in the sacroiliac joint that radiate downward on the right side.

### Extremities

Pain in the axilla, extending part way down the arms.

Sharp and shooting pains in the muscles and joints, better from walking and warmth.

Jumpy legs at night. Pain, especially in the knees and feet. Throbbing pains in the fingers.

### Sleep

Difficulty getting to sleep at night. Sleeplessness from anxiety. Unrefreshing sleep.

### Generalities

Generally more chilly than usual. Coldness of body parts.

### Remedy Comparisons

*Gelsemium*: Both remedies have the following symptoms: dullness of the mind, fear of starting new things, fear of confrontation, and anxiety from demands made on them.

*Magnesia muriatica*: This remedy is also similar in the following ways: fear of confrontation, a strong sense of duty, fear to offend others, and tired on waking.

*Opium* and *Nux moschata*: Need to be differentiated any time one has a case with overwhelming feelings of sleepiness in the day.

*Magnetis polus arcticus*: I have used this medicine with success when the main symptom of the case was slowness in performing mental work. She would take ten hours to do three math problems, for example. *Taxus* also has this type of mental slowness.

*Baryta carbonica*: Both remedies have mental slowness, disorganized thinking, timidity, anxiety in public, and lack of self-confidence. *Taxus* is more sleepy and *Baryta carbonica* is more concerned about the appearance of self-perfection.

*Ambra gresia*: Like *Taxus*, *Ambra* prefers to be alone, shies away from crowds, and avoids confrontation. Both remedies also worry at night, causing sleeplessness. *Taxis* is slower to learn things, while *Ambra gresia* blushes more easily from self-consciousness.

### Summary of *Taxus brevifolia*

- Slow to learn, dull and dense.
- Thoughts disorganized.
- Anxiety.
- Yielding.
- Sleepiness in the day.

### Repertory Additions for *Taxus brevifolia*

MIND: AILMENTS FROM; discords between, friends, one's

MIND: AILMENTS FROM; mortification

MIND: AMBITION; loss of

MIND: ANXIETY

MIND: ANXIETY; night

MIND: ANXIETY; conscience; anxiety of

MIND: ANXIETY; family; about his

MIND: ANXIETY; looking steadily

MIND: BUSINESS; aversion to

MIND: COMPANY; aversion to

MIND: CONCENTRATION; difficult, room full of people

MIND: CONCENTRATION; difficult, studying

MIND: CONFIDENCE; want of self-confidence

MIND: CONFIDENCE; want of self-confidence, failure, feels himself a

MIND: CONFUSION of mind

MIND: CONFUSION of mind; conversation, agg.

MIND: CONFUSION of mind; dream, as if in a

MIND: CONFUSION of mind; spoken to, when

MIND: CONFUSION of mind; walking, amel.

MIND: CONSCIENTIOUS about trifles

MIND: DEATH; thoughts of, fear, without

MIND: DELUSIONS; alone, being, world; alone in the  
 MIND: DELUSIONS; criticized, she is  
 MIND: DISSOCIATION from environment  
 MIND: DULLNESS  
 MIND: DULLNESS; children, in  
 MIND: DULLNESS; grief:  
 MIND: DULLNESS; reading  
 MIND: DULLNESS; sleepiness, with  
 MIND: DULLNESS; studying; when  
 MIND: FEAR; failure, of  
 MIND: FEAR; medicine, taking too much medicine, of  
 MIND: FEAR; reproaches, of  
 MIND: FEAR; sleep, go to sleep, to  
 MIND: FEAR; undertaking anything, of  
 MIND: GESTURES; makes, hands, involuntary mo-  
 tions of the, wringing the hands  
 MIND: GRIEF  
 MIND: HOMESICKNESS  
 MIND: MILDNESS  
 MIND: PLEASING; desire to please others  
 MIND: READING; difficult; is  
 MIND: READING; unable to read  
 MIND: SADNESS  
 MIND: SENSITIVE; criticism, to  
 MIND: SLOWNESS  
 MIND: SPINELESS  
 MIND: STARING; thoughtless  
 MIND: STUDYING; difficult  
 MIND: TACITURN  
 MIND: THOUGHTS; rush, sleeplessness from  
 MIND: TIMIDITY  
 MIND: YIELDING disposition  
 VERTIGO  
 HEAD: NUMBNESS; sensation of, Brain  
 HEAD: NUMBNESS; sensation of, Brain, grief, from  
 HEAD: PAIN; accompanied by, nausea  
 HEAD: PAIN; lying, amel.  
 HEAD: PAIN; standing, while  
 HEAD: PAIN; walking, while  
 HEAD: PAIN; Forehead, in  
 HEAD: PAIN; Occiput  
 HEAD: PAIN; pressing, forehead  
 EYE: PAIN; sand, as from  
 VISION: BLURRED  
 EAR: NOISES in; ringing  
 EAR: PAIN  
 MOUTH: DRYNESS  
 MOUTH: NODOSITIES; Palate  
 MOUTH: NODOSITIES; Palate, tender disc  
 MOUTH: TUMORS; Palate, soft and tender tumors  
 THROAT: ITCHING  
 THROAT: PAIN  
 EXTERNAL THROAT: PAIN; Cervical glands  
 STOMACH: PAIN  
 STOMACH: THIRST  
 ABDOMEN: PAIN; cramping

RECTUM: CONSTIPATION  
 RECTUM: DIARRHEA  
 BLADDER: URINATION; frequent, night  
 URETHRA: PAIN; burning  
 FEMALE GENITALIA/SEX: LEUKORRHEA; menses,  
 after  
 RESPIRATION: ASTHMATIC  
 RESPIRATION: DIFFICULT; sweets, after  
 CHEST: PAIN; Axilla  
 CHEST: PAIN; Axilla, extending to, arm  
 CHEST: PAIN; Axilla, Region of, extending to, arms;  
 down  
 CHEST: PALPITATION of heart; accompanied by,  
 nausea and vertigo  
 CHEST: PALPITATION of heart, anxiety, with  
 CHEST: PALPITATION of heart, fright, after  
 BACK: PAIN; extending to, neck  
 BACK: PAIN; Sacroiliac symphysis  
 BACK: PAIN; Sacroiliac symphysis, extending to, downward  
 EXTREMITIES: CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME  
 EXTREMITIES: COLDNESS; Hands, icy  
 EXTREMITIES: COLDNESS; Foot, icy cold  
 EXTREMITIES: CRAMPS; Lower limbs  
 EXTREMITIES: JERKING; Lower limbs  
 EXTREMITIES: JERKING; Lower limbs, sleep, going to, on  
 EXTREMITIES: PAIN; Joints  
 EXTREMITIES: PAIN; Hip  
 EXTREMITIES: PAIN; Knee  
 EXTREMITIES: PAIN; Foot  
 EXTREMITIES: RESTLESSNESS; night  
 EXTREMITIES: RESTLESSNESS; Lower limbs, evening  
 EXTREMITIES: WEAKNESS  
 SLEEP: ANXIOUS  
 SLEEP: SLEEPINESS  
 SLEEP: SLEEPINESS; overpowering  
 SLEEP: SLEEPINESS; reading  
 SLEEP: SLEEPLESSNESS; anxiety, from  
 SLEEP: SLEEPLESSNESS; thoughts, activity of thoughts, from  
 SLEEP: UNREFRESHING  
 SLEEP: WAKING; fright, as from  
 DREAMS: ANIMALS; wild  
 DREAMS: DEAD; of the, relatives  
 DREAMS: FRIGHTFUL  
 DREAMS: NIGHTMARES  
 GENERALS: COLD; agg.  
 GENERALS: FOOD and DRINKS; fat, agg.  
 GENERALS: FOOD and DRINKS; oil, agg.  
 GENERALS: SUN; exposure to the sun

*About the author: Steven Olsen ND, DHNAP is a teacher at the Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine. He has been in full-time practice since January of 1988. He is the author of several provings which are included in his books "Trees and Plants That Heal" and "Arbor Medica."*