

The Pharmacist and Homoeopathy

by A.R. PINKUS, MRPharmS.

From a talk given at The British Homoeopathic Association Pharmacy Course, March 1992.

Role of the Pharmacist

I think it is important to point out the role of the pharmacist in the context of homoeopathy. There are divisions you have to draw. In other words, do you get involved in *constitutional* prescribing or shouldn't you? Are you just looking at *acute* prescribing? Because this talk is going to be about the use of remedies and there are many grey areas where we may not want to get involved. For instance, you may not want to deal with constitutional prescribing in pregnancy, probably best not to get involved in using some remedies earlier on.

But there are areas you may want to know about, like using remedies for pregnancy sickness, or perhaps varicose veins, or haemorrhoids during the latter part of pregnancy, backaches, etc.

There are also very interesting remedies you might use for the birthing process itself and afterwards going through to the mother and helping with cracked nipples and problems with milking.

Just looking at that as a global role, the area in which you are mostly getting involved, you are talking about *counter prescribing* for acute illness. Most of this weekend has been devoted to your education in homoeopathy which has become enhanced, so everything you really learnt, and a lot of things you probably learnt when you originally trained, you end up using in homoeopathy.

It is a strange thing but I find I use more of my pharmacy course now than I ever did counting pills. There is more interest in that area as well. So you can decide whether you want to use *counter prescribing* or you may end up being involved in *dispensing*, in which case obviously you may see prescriptions on F.P.10s.

Your emphasis in homoeopathy may be a dispensing role and that can be either just getting something already made up or in actually making it. Alternatively you may want to get more involved with the counter prescribing role, and that might lead on to making up the remedies. There are various levels at which you can become useful.

There is a lot of discussion about what homoeopathy is and what it isn't. I would say it is a true holistic therapy because it is looking at the whole person.

It is not just looking at bits and pieces, although again and in respect of any particular condition you like to name, there are going to be a **constellation of remedies** that come up, and these are going to treat the whole person. So you are not just looking at Mrs. Blogg's right leg, you are looking at Mrs. Blogg's right leg in conjunction with the rest of her body and what is going on there. In conjunction with that of course what are the time effects and what are the space effects? We will go on to that in a minute. So an empirical approach, it is not an invasive approach, it is based not just on objective material but also subjective material.

Books

We use a special materia medica, — the pharmacists 'pocket dictionary of homoeopathy'. Basically you have this incredible wealth of data which is very difficult to access, because access is through the rather complicated indices which are repertories written by several different authors. Mostly written a long time ago, the language is rather archaic and doesn't seem to mean much until you come to know about homoeopathy.

From the conventional point of view someone comes to you with any symptom and your immediate response is 'how do we get rid of this symptom?' from a pharmaceutical point of view, and the whole medical industry is interested in doing the same thing.

Are the symptoms the disease per se or are they just a reflection of what is going on underneath? If the disease is what is going on underneath and the body is trying to get better, and in getting better it throws up these symptoms — it is 'this is the best I can do, I am getting better and I am compromising this area, but that is part of the process of cure.'

If that is happening and you come along and whip the symptoms away it is a bit like going up to a blind man with a white stick and kicking his stick away -- it has the same effect, he falls over and gets worse.

That is our experience with homoeopathy; we have numerous examples of how the stick has been kicked and what the reaction of the patient is. If you come along on the other hand and say yes, those symptoms are part of the cure, and if that is the direction the cure is taking I am going to guide him along that path and give him a very specific shove. What we want to do with the remedy is to elicit a response; in fact the remedy has two effects, primary and secondary.

Levels of Effect

The primary effect is the impact on the body which Hahnemann described, and you have to remember that he was talking in the era when action and reaction were equal and opposite. He would talk in terms of "I come along and stick my hand in cold water and the other one gets hot." In other words he was saying that the body has a compensatory activity, cause and effect are equal and opposite.

This is how he explained homoeopathy. If I find something in nature which is going to have a very specific impact on the body then I get a response, and it is the response you are seeing in the book. When you open a *Materia Medica* all the monographs you see are what the desired response is going to be, in other words the symptoms you are trying to cover.

The other important point is that homoeopathy is very low tech outside the body, the whole concept you are seeing is a bit 'fuddy, duddy', the making up by hand of the remedies seems a bit implausible these days. But when it gets inside the body, because of this nature I have described of the primary and secondary fact, you can take it a bit further, it is very high tech.

You know that drugs are designed to meet specific receptor needs and act on specific organs, but you are not taking a blind bit of notice of what is going on with that individual.

It doesn't matter whether somebody comes to you with headaches, left-sided or right-sided, or if it is on a

Thursday afternoon once a month, that is of no value to you whatsoever; but if you are looking at it from a homoeopathic point of view you are very interested in the effects of time and space.

Wholistic View

In terms of time homoeopathy needs to know about past history, and the present symptoms, and what will happen in the future. It is very interested in 'what is the timing of the event? when did it start? where did it start?' that is bringing in space. You could make a list and this is just a brief one, of areas of time and space. It is important to note this first because every remedy can be talked of in terms of time and space. In other words what part of the body does it affect? The upper half? The lower half? Is it diagonally related, upper left and lower right? You will see this in the book as you go through, some remedies have a particular affinity for the right side of the body and some for the left side, some have an affinity for an affection that begins in one part and creeps up to another. So you can describe each remedy very accurately in terms of time and space, there is this total picture that gets involved.

Mother and Infant

Bearing those ideas in mind here are some of the problems you will face in mother and infant situations. One is when the pregnant mother comes to you and says she is feeling really sick; what are you going to do? There is very little we can do safely. When you look at homoeopathic remedies, however, there is a huge variety of things you can use. One of the difficulties is differentiating one from another in terms of symptoms.

What you find with homoeopathy is that it is a bit like a radio dial, there are hundreds of stations all very near each other and you have to tune very carefully to get the one you want, in order to get your impact on the symptoms and the corresponding response. If you are a remedy that is no where near the symptoms there will be no impact, no response. If you choose a remedy that is fairly close you may or may not see a response. Like hitting a nail with a hammer you have to be accurate and decide how hard to hit it to make an impact; the harder the impact the greater the response, and in homoeopathy the size of the impact is decided by the potency.

It is important to notice in a case like this that you are dealing with a clinical picture, you are not taking a constitutional case. You are treating the person who is in front of you with a particular set of symptoms, and you are trying to find the best remedy to fit, and most of the prescribing that is done in the pharmacy is going to be a clinical type of prescribing.

In other words you are trying to find the best remedy fairly quickly without taking a long case history, which is not really the task of the pharmacist, it is the job of the homoeopathic doctor or practitioner who can spend an hour or so getting the history in detail. There is no question that you can do a lot of very good work with acute prescribing and there are a lot of remedies you will get to know. The easiest one is *Arnica* which comes up time and again.

You will find there are *constellations* of remedies, there are those that you are going to get to know very

quickly and easily which cover a wide spectrum of symptoms. These are known as *polycrests*, and they are the remedies which are going to come up in any group of symptoms you get. Then there are the smaller remedies which are quite rare, which may have very little known about them but you will use them in certain circumstances.

The situation with *Ipecacuanha* is a constant nausea which is going on all day long. The unusual thing about it is there may be some vomiting but even so the woman has a clean tongue. That is what you are looking for -- it is unusual to have a clean tongue after vomiting. Basically if you get stuck looking for remedies for this particular part of the pregnancy you generally use *Ipecac.* because it is a global remedy.

You may not see some of the mental symptoms, but generally with something like nausea and sickness in pregnancy you are dealing with vagal stimulation, you get palor and possible fainting. You will find that the nausea and vomiting vary considerably from one patient to another. You will recognise certain ones that you have seen before but it is not until you have done a lot of prescribing that you realise that they all are very, very different.

What tends to get over-emphasised is the food cravings; what type of food she wants to eat, and if she does not want any, that is also significant. So with *Ipecac* you have the mental side which is being irritable, peevish and contemptible, you have the type of constant vomiting which is unusual because pregnancy sickness is known as 'morning sickness' and you would only expect to see it during the morning. A lot of salivation; if you look at the symptoms you will find that salivation is a quite common symptom, but to what extent is it there? If it is there a lot it might signify a particular remedy, like *Lobelia*. Then you ask what taste there is in the mouth. The stomach feels relaxed. You start to separate out the vagal responses that you know are going to be there with the responses which are rather more subjective -- that is what you are looking at all the way. With *Ipecac* the key note is the tongue may be clean and there may be some hiccoughs. The face is pale (common) twitching (that is not terribly common), blue circles round the eyes (that is not common). You are sorting out what is anticipated and what isn't. A gastric headache extending to the teeth (that is a fairly unusual statement for someone to make), there is a cutting pain round the naval, and there may be haemorrhaging. Now *Ipecac* is a haemorrhagic remedy so you might see haemorrhages. Basically you anticipate seeing someone who is vomiting or retching with nausea going all through the day, and they have this unusual clean tongue.

Modalities

Then come the modalities, what makes it worse? These are probably the best indicators for choosing a remedy; you have seen a lot of common information there but what is not common? Feeling nauseous from watching cars passing -- that is unusual. Feeling nauseous or vomiting when lying down is fairly common so you cannot put too much emphasis on that but it does allow you to choose from one to the other. The periodicity is probably not a strong indicator. Some odd ones are the nausea being worse from warm moist air, when the day is close and humid. Worse from eating

veal is an extraordinary modality which you may never come across.

Sepia is a very unusual remedy for it has a very strong tie — in to the hormonal cycle. You will find that it is one of the remedies which has some impact in the negative feedback cycle within the hormonal structure. In a lot of cases you will find that remedies switch off and on, factors like hormonal impact, and it is interesting that it is used in many different contexts in female hormonal problems, in this case nausea and vomiting.

What do you get? It is really a strange remedy, invariably it is an incisive person, they can penetrate right to the core of a problem, but they are totally miserable in themselves. They are very cold, the coldness is not just felt physically, but is mental as well.

It is difficult to know how much of this you are going to see because you are painting a picture of a remedy, a constitutional picture at the same time as you are painting a picture of the symptoms. What you may see is someone who is miserable inside and sometimes what happens is that they weep as they are telling their symptoms, and that is fairly indicative of a *Sepia* case.

To look at you may find that there is a facial point, and if it is a constitutional *Sepia* you will see the saddle across the nose, an area of colouration, and if you start questioning you will find that they are very sad, they are very different towards the husband. There is usually a marked rift between husband and wife, who can be very irritable with the husband and the kids. She may be very irritable and start kicking things — objects not the kids. They have conflicts which come up all the time, and are very irritable with other members of the family but they don't want to be left alone, contradictory aspects come in.

Their pregnancy nausea gets much worse during the day, and are worse from getting overheated. The nausea is definitely in the morning, but their activity during the day makes it worse, ironing in the afternoon will completely wipe them out — they get very much worse from getting heated and tired. In terms of the actual nausea, they are nauseous from not just the sight and smell of food, which will make a lot of people retch, but the thought of food will set them off. As regards time, they get sick in the morning before breakfast and vomit immediately after eating. In terms of desires they like strong flavours, vinegars and acids, lemony things and pickles.

The background information is that *Sepia* people are very chilly and there is portal congestion. They have bearing down pains, and sometimes cross their legs because they feel all the pressure is going to escape downwards. That is not so noticeable when you talk about the type of nausea which is actually worse when they are lying on their side.

They are also worse from tobacco smoke and that is not very unusual, so you have to be careful how much emphasis you place on that as being an indicator that *Sepia* is a remedy of choice. Your indicator is really going to be this one which is the sight and smell of food, first thing in the morning and straight away it starts. Worse from cold. Again you have to be very careful how much emphasis you place on each of these modalities as some are a lot more important than others.

Lobelia used to be used as an anti-smoking cure, but if you look at it from a constitutional point of view, if it

was a typical *Lobelia* patient going through pregnancy, she may be of light complexion, fleshy, relaxed, have a depressed condition, but not weepy. The nausea is followed by dyspepsia. The big picture here is that there is a lot of acidity and a strong metallic taste in the mouth with a huge amount of salivation, which is unusual, along with a gastric headache, a dull heavy headache. Just look for the unusual things to choose the remedy; with *Lobelia* you have extreme nausea and vomiting with heartburn, and it is the heartburn which is the extra thing you are looking for.

The strange thing is they have a good appetite, and the person is actually better from eating, that is an unusual symptom, as most cases are not better from eating. In terms of modalities, better for rapid motion, and better from eating a little and better from warmth. They are actually worse from slow motion — that is quite unusual if you feel nauseous. You have quite a clear picture there. There may be an indication of low blood sugar and she may be better from frequent small protein meals to stave off the nausea, other remedies can be thought of after that.

Other remedies that occur are *Kreosotum*, *Symphoricarpus*, *Nux Vomica*, *Cocculus*, and *Aletris*. *Symphoricarpus* or Snowberry has got virtually no picture at all to it and if all else fails it is something worth trying.



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News from Homoeopathic Groups

THE EAST DORSET HOMOEOPATHIC GROUP

The East Dorset Homoeopathic Group held its Inauguration Meeting on Tuesday, 24th November, 1992, at the West Parley Memorial Hall.

It was agreed meetings be held on the first Tuesday in the month (except for holiday months), at the above hall at 7.30 p.m. The first meeting will be 2nd February, 1993.

For further information please telephone Phyllis Williams 0202-824442.

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THE GUILDFORD HOMOEOPATHIC GROUP

Meetings are held on the first Thursday in the month at 7.45 for 8.00 p.m. at The Continuing Education Centre (off Warren Road), St. Luke's Hospital, Guildford.

Thursday, 4th February, 1993. A talk by Nim Barnes from Foresight, 'Preparation for Pregnancy and Safeguarding the Health of the Baby'.

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THE CATERHAM HOMOEOPATHIC GROUP

Our aim is to spread knowledge of homoeopathy and natural therapies to lay people so that they may treat themselves and their families and anyone who asks for help in minor accidents and common ailments.

Application forms available from Committee Members. Annual subscription fee £5, Senior Citizens £2.50, Family Membership £8, due on 1st November. Cheques payable please to Caterham Homoeopathic Group.

Meetings to be held on the third Thursday of each month. Excluding August and December. Venue: St. Mary's Church Hall, Church Hill, Caterham, 7.45 for 8.00 p.m.

Thursday, 18th February, 1993. Geraldine A. Day on 'Case Taking'.

Thursday, 18th March, 1993. Angela Dees, BA.Hons. (Psychology) on 'Bach Flower Remedies' (Rescue Remedy and More).

Thursday, 15th April, 1993. Robin Logan on 'More Emotional Remedies'.

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THE NORTHERN IRELAND HOMOEOPATHIC GROUP

Our Society was formed 15 years ago to promote medical homoeopathy and to press for provision of an NHS homoeopathic clinic, similar to those in other parts of the United Kingdom. However, this has not yet

materialised and a small pilot scheme was set up to provide private treatment. For patients unable to meet the cost of this treatment, subsidies are provided from fund raising events, such as: Banquet and Gala evening at Belfast City Hall, Musical evenings at Baronscourt (home of the Duchess of Abercorn), and at the Europa Hotel in Belfast.

Premises suitable for medical practitioners and for 'Teach-Ins' have been acquired at the following address: Complementary Medical Centre, 1 Cranmore Park, Belfast BT9 6JF.

In line with today's trends in Complementary Medicine, doctors with expertise in Osteopathy and Acupuncture have been invited to share these premises with us.

For further information telephone Sally Young (0232) 662942.

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THE NORTH COTSWOLD HOMOEOPATHIC GROUP

Meetings held every fourth Wednesday, 7.45 for 8.00 p.m., at the Library, Back Lane, Winchcombe, near Cheltenham.

Next meeting, Wednesday, 24th February, 1993. **Reflexology: The Mirror of the Body.**

Wednesday, 24th March, 1993. 'Introducing Kinefiology' by Mr. Eddie Borelli.

Wednesday, 28th April, 1993. 'Stress Control' by Mr. Robert Nichols.

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Recollections

by Mrs. MAY SINNOTT

After reading the article about Dr. Foley in this month's journal, I thought you might be interested in a few more recollections of him.

Dr. Foley was a great friend of my father, Joseph Foley (no relation), and my two brothers and myself almost became part of their family. He and Mrs. Foley were godparents to my younger brother and Dr. Foley saw me through diphtheria and many of our childhood illnesses. I have mentioned this in two articles I had published in 'Homoeopathy' some years ago.

After Mrs. Foley died Dr. Foley came back to England and lived in Wallasey with his former housekeeper and family until his death. He was buried in Frankley Cemetery at the time when I was expecting my second baby and my husband attended his funeral.

Dr. Foley introduced my father to homoeopathy in the 1920s and is the reason I am now an ardent homoeopath. We could never repay him for all his kindness to us and I was delighted to know he was remembered by others.

Please excuse the writing, but I had a cataract operation on Tuesday and am getting used to my 'new eye'. My black eye is disappearing rapidly with 'Arnica'!