

# The Homoeopathic Repertory

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## THE REPERTORY

The word Repertory means "a place for finding something" or "a store of information". A Homoeopathic Repertory is a guide which gives all the information needed to aid choosing the appropriate medicine for the individual patient who requires treatment. It is a cross-reference book from which to quickly extract the knowledge you need from a *Materia Medica*. With experience the Repertory becomes a memory tickler, and makes the need for cross-checking references less frequent

**A MATERIA MEDICA IS A BOOK WHICH DESCRIBES IN DETAIL THE PROPERTIES OF MEDICINES.**

**A MATERIA MEDICA DESCRIBES HOW, WHY AND WHEN MEDICINES ARE USED.**

**A REPERTORY IS AN IMPORTANT ADJUNCT TO A MATERIA MEDICA.**

**A REPERTORY IS OF NO PRACTICAL USE WITHOUT AN ADEQUATE MATERIA MEDICA.**

**Often a *Materia Medica* and a Repertory are combined in one book.**

## HOMOEOPATHIC PRINCIPLES UPON WHICH REPERTORIZING SHOULD BE BASED

A Repertory should be used with certain homoeopathic principles in mind. There are two main groups into which these Principles fall:

1. **Those which relate to The Patient.** Consult the Repertory, remembering the Patient:
  - a. As an Individual, whose general well-being is the primary concern. Life-threatening diseases such as asthma should be treated before a less critical eczema.
  - b. As a Whole Person, where it is acknowledged that each part is inter-dependent on every other part, and that the Whole Person is greater than the sum of their parts.
  - c. In the context of their family medical history and their own medical history.
  - d. In relationship to their present life-style, eating habits, stresses, allergies, etc.
  - e. Within their "Constitutional Type", which is indicated by their physical and temperamental characteristics.
2. **Those which relate to The Medicine.** When consulting the Repertory remember:
  - a. The Law of Similars (Like Cures Like) as the basis for prescribing medicines.
  - b. The use of the Minimum dose needed to effect a Cure.
  - c. To choose the Potency best suited to the Patient and their disease, and most appropriate to the medicine.
  - d. To choose the most suitable time to give the medicine: to choose the correct frequency of the dose to make the medicine most efficacious.
  - e. To consider the Complementary or Inimical

Action of one homoeopathic medicine upon another.

- f. To consider the effect of the medicine on the patient. Whether, if there is a positive response, or an aggravation of symptoms, or an improvement followed by a relapse, or no change, the medicine should be stopped, continued or changed.

## THE DESIGN OF A REPERTORY

Hahnemann set the pattern for the design of repertories when he established homoeopathy as a SYSTEMATIC way of practising medicine.

The FORM the repertories take is planned to help the practitioner extract information easily: repertories are divided into sections, then sub-sections both according to a set pattern to fit into a scheme.

The INTRODUCTION to a Repertory will explain the significance of its design and whether, for instance, the more important features are printed in "italics" or "black type" to make them stand out. Many people skip an Introduction! Doing this with a homoeopathic repertory will detract from its value.

"INDICATIONS" listed in the repertory will lead to the right choice of a remedy. These can be found quickly and easily by consulting the right section of the Repertory.

The sooner the lay-out of the repertory becomes familiar the better for both practitioner and patient. A "Clinical" or "Therapeutic" Repertory will list physical and mental symptoms or illness alphabetically. Other Repertories follow the pattern of the homoeopathic "Law of Cure", e.g. Bönninghausen.

The Homoeopathic "Law of Cure" states that the progress of Cure follows a certain course:

- a. From Above Downwards (i.e. it begins with problems located in the head and works down the body)
- b. From the Centre Outwards (i.e. from central organs such as the heart to extremities like the fingers)
- c. From Within Outwards (i.e. from major organs such as the liver to less vital organs such as the skin)
- d. From the Past to the Present (i.e. symptoms from the past may emerge in the process of curing the patient).

This pattern set by the "Law of Cure" can be seen in the groupings into which a Repertory is divided. The structure of the Repertory is divided into Sections, working downwards, beginning with the Mind, then the Head, Eyes, Ears, Mouth, Throat, etc. The Respiratory System, the Digestive Tract, the Organs of Reproduction, the Skin, etc. are dealt with in appropriate groupings, but not necessarily alphabetically. But no Repertory is perfect, and even Kent, perhaps the best known and most comprehensive, has no section on the heart. It is buried in the Section on the Chest!

## THE LANGUAGE OF REPERTORY

Every subject has its own technical words. To understand a Repertory and a *Materia Medica* certain words have to be understood. A Repertory

may assume that the reader is familiar with the symbols and terms used in prescribing which are found in a *Materia Medica*. These technical words will refer to the potency (strength) of the medicine and give instructions about the dose and frequency of repetition. Some will be in pharmaceutical language (that used by pharmacists or chemists) and other terms have been coined by homoeopaths of previous generations. As these may vary, read the Introduction to your own *Materia Medica*.

## EXPLAINING CATEGORIES FOUND IN MOST REPERTORIES

### 1. Causation

This is a word used in Repertories to classify the **causes** of certain symptoms. For example, a Repertory will help you differentiate between an attack of diarrhoea **caused** by food poisoning, or one which is **caused** by apprehension (a visit to the dentist, an examination or fear of flying, etc.) The treatment of diarrhoea from two such different **causes** will clearly be different. The food poisoning usually responds to *Ars. Alb.* and the apprehension to *Arg. Nit.* This becomes clear when the Repertory, in conjunction with the *Materia Medica*, is used to check one indication against another. Information is often listed separately, usually in alphabetical order, but is sometimes under a method which the individual writer has devised. Not all information has been compiled into lists. Much will be found in the text of the *Materia Medica* and will be learnt with time.

### 2. Aggravations

This word needs little defining. Homoeopathically it means that a patient's symptoms, sensations or general condition are getting worse. Almost everything in life, any situation or circumstance, can cause these **aggravations**. At some time or in some place some patient will experience an **aggravation**. The time of day, or season of the year, or location at the sea-side, from fears, from foods, from fresh air, or lack of it, all can cause **aggravations**. Today some **aggravations** may be called allergies. **aggravations** can be caused in the process of cure, the "Worse Before its Better" syndrome which homoeopaths expect. Experience has shown that certain symptoms may be aggravated by treatment as the Vital Force works to heal the whole person. For example, a teenager with spots may suffer one or two quite juicy boils before the skin finally clears. This is part of the healing process and should be treated homoeopathically, and not with antibiotics. The symbol < used in repertories means "Worse For".

### 3. Ameliorations

This word has the opposite meaning to Aggravation, meaning that there is an improvement in the patient or their symptoms. In a Repertory there are lists almost identical to those headed Aggravation, but which mean that the patient improves under the listed circumstances rather than deteriorates. Temporary or superficial improvements, say for instance when a sore throat improves from a hot drink, or a change of position eases a pain, are all **ameliorations**. They are pointers to the indicated remedy. The symbol > means "Better For".

### 4. Concomitants

This word means "Things which go together". Such a list in a Repertory means that there is a relationship

between the symptoms. For instance, a teething baby will have as a "Concomitant" one red cheek, and be very fractious. The appropriate remedy is *Chamomilla*. *Belladonna*'s "Concomitant" is a red, flushed (but not bloated) face.

### 5. Modalities

The word "Mode" means "Fashionable" or, in more general terms "That which occurs most frequently". Its use as a section in a homoeopathic repertory helps to pinpoint the right choice of medicine. Under "Modalities" are long lists of "Aggravations" and "Ameliorations" such as having a hair cut, eating shell fish, or the phases of the moon. The "Modalities" section of the repertory highlights such indications. It is another aid to choosing the right remedy. For example, if someone always gets a sore throat after a hair cut the indicated remedy would be *Belladonna*. The sore throat occurs most frequently after a hair cut, not from singing or eating strawberries.

When something occurs so often that the patient realises there is a cause and effect pattern in their symptoms or sensations or the general health, this is a "Modality". No matter how unusual or peculiar the information the patient gives, it is worth looking up in the "Modalities" section of the repertory. The information might be just the clue that is needed in making the right selection between two medicines.

### 6. Generalities

"Generalities" is the term given to a wide range of symptoms which most patients will complain of if they are unwell. "Generalities" help to differentiate between one illness and another. The practitioner knows whether he is treating someone with a chest problem or a digestive problem. "Generalities" build up a "General" picture of the state of health of the individual patient. These include tiredness, mental lethargy, aching limbs, sleeplessness, headaches, etc., and a whole range of symptoms which go with many illnesses. Anyone with a bad cough will cough; if they are kept awake with it they will be tired, if it is severe they will feel generally unwell. The choice of medicine cannot be made without these "Generalities", but a homoeopath needs more detail from the patient before the final prescription is chosen. The homoeopathic cough medicine cannot be prescribed on these "Generalities" alone. All the "Generalities" tell the practitioner is that the patient has a cough, and that the cough is the predominant health problem.

### 7. Particulars

A "Particular" indication is an unusual sign, symptom or sensation, which comes to light when a homoeopathic practitioner talks to a patient. It is the most useful discovery that can be made. It is that which is "Particular" to an individual patient, either related to their disease at the time they come for help, or because it is part of the general make-up of the person as a whole. This "Particular" indication can be the leading clue in searching for the right remedy. Homoeopathic medicines are prescribed for the particular needs of individual patients and the most successful medicines are those which have the "Particular" characteristic which will fit the patient's "Particular" symptom. The Art of homoeopathic prescribing is to know the "Particular" characteristics of the medicines and to be able to match them to the "Particular" indications which

come to light during the course of taking a case history, Homoeopathy has very few specific medicines for specific named diseases, apart from such medicines as *Arnica* for accidents.

### 8. Characteristics

In homoeopathy medicines have "Characteristics". Familiarity with a *Materia Medica* and a *Repertory* is the best way to learn the "Characteristics" of the medicines. Building up a mental image of the curative capability of the medicines takes time. Once a particular "Characteristic" of a medicine has impressed itself on the mind of the practitioner, that "Characteristic" will be a clear indication for its use. When the "Characteristic" of the medicine matches the "Particular Characteristic" described by the patient the medicine is known as the 'Similium'. For example, the "Characteristic" of *Bryonia* is that it is "worse for movement", whether it is a cough which is aggravated by the movement of talking, or a stiff neck which is aggravated when turning the neck to back a car, or any pain which is "worse for movement", *Bryonia* should be the chosen medicine.

### 9. Totality of Symptoms

Homoeopaths tend to follow the teaching of its founder, Samuel Hahnemann, who recommended that a prescription should be the result of a complete assessment of ALL the patient's signs and symptoms, not on just one rash, or one pain or one local discharge. Everything which helps to build up a picture of the patient as a person, as well as a picture of their over-all state of disease has to be taken into account. Homoeopathy does not only take into account the local or immediate symptoms. The "TOTAL" picture of ill-health which emerges when all the signs and symptoms have been considered is the basis upon which treatment is prescribed.

### 10. Locality

This means exactly what it says. During a consultation, when "Taking the Case" the homoeopath has to try to identify the exact locality of the pain, symptom or sensation. The *Repertory* will then be the guide to the best remedy for the problem in that exact locality of the body, be it the big toe or the tip of the nose.

### USING A REPERTORY

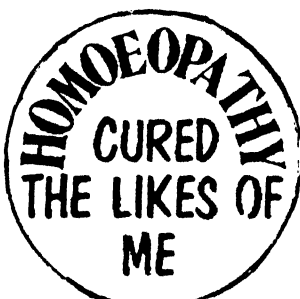
A *repertory* is a source of information. For those who are not used to finding their way around a *repertory*, begin by looking up that which is most obvious. This is usually the pre-dominant symptom of the illness from which the patient is suffering. For example, under "Throat" will be the sub-heading "Sore". In a "Clinical" or "Therapeutic" *repertory* it will be listed either as "Sore Throat" or "Tonsillitis". By referring to other sections of the *repertory* it will be made clear whether the best choice of medicine is, for instance, *Belladonna*, when the throat is bright red, it is very painful to swallow, and there is, as a "Concomitant", a flushed face. If the throat is more bluish, and began on the left side, then the choice would be *Lachesis*. Cross check the appropriate section of the *Repertory* with the information about the chosen medicine listed in the *Materia Medica*. This extra information will confirm that the choice is correct, and will give details of the best potency to use, how often the dose should be repeated and any other relevant information.

### Recommended Books

The most widely used *Materia Medica* is Boericke. It has an excellent *Repertory* and is both compact and comprehensive.

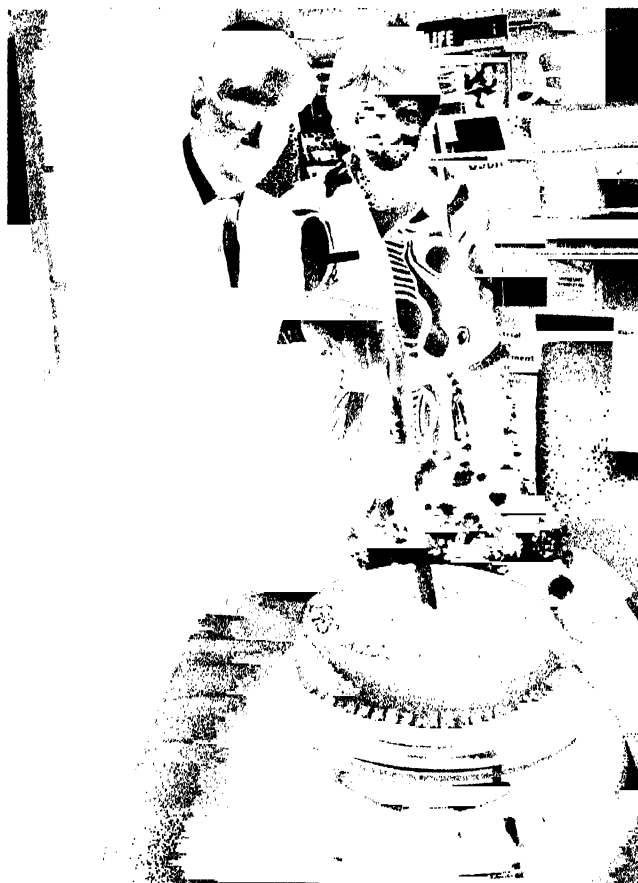
Dr. Clarke's "The Prescriber" is a very useful quick reference book. He has also produced a "Clinical *Repertory*". Both books were written to supplement his extensive *Materia Medica* (three volumes).

The most comprehensive *repertory* by Kent is too detailed for beginners, and impractical for those short of time.



— 50p each  
GREEN ON WHITE

(Minimum order 2 — Send cheque £1.25 including postage.)



*Photo by courtesy of the Kent and Sussex Courier.*

The Tunbridge Wells Homoeopathic Hospital recently celebrated its 90th anniversary. Guest of Honour at a Garden Party held to celebrate the event was H.R.H. The Duke of Gloucester, Patron of the Homoeopathic Trust. The Duke is seen here cutting the celebratory cake with Dr Anne Clover, consultant at the hospital