

A New Look at Old Remedies

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Abstract

Several unusual remedies prescribed for various clinical conditions are highlighted. Covered are such conditions as nausea of pregnancy, colds and allergic rhinitis, external otitis, urinary incontinence, postnasal catarrh, proteinuria, pre-eclampsia, influenza, chronic fatigue syndrome, coughs, diabetic neuropathy, herpes zoster, and facial neuralgia.

Keywords

Nausea of pregnancy, colds, allergic rhinitis, external otitis, urinary incontinence, postnasal catarrh, proteinuria, pre-eclampsia, influenza, chronic fatigue syndrome, coughs, diabetic neuropathy, herpes zoster, facial neuralgia, *Symphoricarpus racemosa*, *Amygdalus persica*, *Wyethia*, *Arundo*, *Kali sulphuricum chromico*, oil of mullein, *Verbascum*, *Arum dracontium*, *Arum triphyllum*, *Kali chloratum*, *Ichthyotoxin*, *Antimonium sulphuratum auratum*, *Calcarea carbonica*, *Sarcocollae acid*, *Phosphoric acid*, *Picric acid*, *Triosteum perfoliatum*, *Antimonium iudatum*, *Populus candicans*, *Gnaphalium*, *Zincum valerianum*.

In preparation for a presentation I gave at the Ohio/Michigan/Pennsylvania and Southern Homeopathic Medical Societies' Meeting in 1990, I reviewed my clinical practice for a period of four months, paying special attention to unusual remedies that I found especially useful. The following is a report of my observations.

Pregnant and Nauseous

One of the problems that came up frequently was nausea, specifically nausea of pregnancy. A lot of women go through pregnancy just fine, but for some reason there is a propensity for having queasiness, nausea and vomiting. You can see the entire spectrum, ranging from squeamishness to intractable, violent vomiting.

The remedies that come to mind most prominently are *Ipecacuanha*, *Nux vomica* — especially for morning sickness — and *Sepia*. Two of our other great remedies are *Colchicum* and *Cocculus*; both possess a very characteristic symptom — even the sight or smell of food excites nausea and vomiting.

Many of these patients feel terrible during the first few months of pregnancy, and anything that we can do to help them will be appreciated. So, in addition to the indicated remedies, I advise some dietary changes: always to keep a little bit of food in the stomach (soda crackers are fine); hot vinegar tea, sweetened with honey; ginger tea; a little extra vitamin B6.

There are two other remedies for nausea for pregnancy which you may or may not have encountered. One is *Symphoricarpus racemosa*, the snowberry. It has been a very important remedy for me for nausea of pregnancy. Looking back at that remedy, we find that in

1882 Dr. Moffit read a paper about it. He talked about Dr. Burlock who, years before, had investigated the snowberry because he was trying to discover remedies that had not yet been incorporated into the Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia. He said of the first prover, an intelligent lady, who, on feeling the marked nausea which it soon produced, said, 'Doctor, this is precisely like the morning sickness that I always experienced during pregnancy.'

That is how *Symphoricarpus* became an important remedy in morning sickness. Julian Winston said that in the naturopathic library in Toronto there is a book with a letter from Kent in which he says that *Symphoricarpus* in a 10M potency is as much a specific for the nausea of pregnancy as any he has ever seen.

Peach Bark

Another remedy that I have found to be important in the nausea of pregnancy is *Amygdalis persica*. This remedy comes from peach bark. Now let me read something that comes from New, Old and Forgotten Remedies by Anschutz. He talks about a paper by Dr. Edson in Chicago in 1890:

"Some ten years ago I had a little patient whose principle difficulty seemed that he was unable to retain anything whatsoever upon his stomach. He would vomit up promptly everything that I gave him, and I had given him everything I had ever heard of and also had some eminent counsel, but it was no go. I was literally at my ropes end. At this juncture an elderly neighbour one of 'the good old mothers', timidly suggested an infusion of peach bark. Interesting how we get some of our remedies. After some thought, I decided to find the bark, which I was fortunate to procure after a long tramp through the country and two feet of snow. I prepared an infusion; the deed was done and presto the child was cured."

He gives various instances of its usefulness. It is a very good remedy for nausea of pregnancy.

These four remedies: *Colchicum*, *Cocculus*, *Symphoricarpus* and *Amygdalis* — I keep on hand and prescribe often.

Desperate

This reminds me of a story. About five or six years ago a patient of mine called and asked if I could come over. She was terribly sick with nausea of pregnancy. In fact they had moved her from the country where she lived to her parents' house, near where I practiced, because she needed care. She had been to the regular doctor and was given injections and suppositories. Nothing was helping. She was desperate. I said I would come over after work.

I took a vial of each of the following seven remedies: *Ipecacuanha*, *Nux vomica*, *Sepia*, *Colchicum*, *Tabacum*, *Amygdalis* and *Symphoricarpus*. I felt that one of those was going to work, but I wanted to speak to the patient first. When I got to the house, I was led downstairs to the recreation room. Everything had been removed, and she was there prostrate on a sleeper couch. I pulled up a chair next to the bed. She looked miserable. She had a pot next to her in which to vomit.

I began talking to her, taking her case with the usual questions. I noticed she turned over to look at the other side of the bed and just started to retch. Her mother was

on the other side of the room talking to her. When she sat up to answer, she vomited again. What remedy do you think? *Bryonia*: Any movement she made caused her to vomit. So remember, you are always looking for the specific symptoms of the patient.

I took out a vial of *Bryonia* and put a dose in water and told her to sip on it. She called the next morning and said she was already getting better. So individualisation of the case is imperative.

Allergies

With the onset of allergy season various remedies call for consideration. There is *Allium cepa*, the red onion, *Arsenicum album*, a very effective and deep-seated remedy, and *Euphrasia*, eyebright, which is of use when the eyes are red and irritated and the nasal discharge bland. If I had to pick one remedy for this condition, I would probably choose *Sabadilla*. It is a wonderful hay fever remedy.

When there is a lot of itching, especially in the palate, *Wyethia* is a wonderful remedy. It is from the poison weed. Accompanying the itching are a sore, red, irritated pharynx and itching of the posterior nasopharynx. Another remedy that has the same deep-seated itching in the mouth, nose and ears, sometimes so intense as to drive the patient crazy, is *Arundo*, from the reed.

I learned of this remedy when, years ago, a patient came in with allergy symptoms. In her history she described a peculiar symptom of pain in the stomach 'as if there were something alive', similar to when she was pregnant. This symptom is not in Kent's *Repertory*, but it is in Boericke's — 'as if a fetus in the abdomen'. *Arundo* had both of those symptoms, and it cured her allergies.

Succinic acid has been helpful to me in the past. It is prepared from amber. It has all the symptoms of allergic rhinitis. I have helped people with that remedy. Another remedy is the alum of chrome, **Kali sulphuricum chromico*, which has sneezing, watery eyes, runny nose, and nasal itching. Recently I have found this remedy to be very useful in allergies.

Once again I want to remind you that we are treating the patient; consequently we try to find a remedy to fit a patient's constitutional nature, the deeper remedy that seems to fit the nature of the case, but, in doing so, we must not ignore the specifics.

Earaches

A useful agent in my daily practice is Mullein, *Verbascum*. Oil of Mullein is a classical remedy for ear aches. This oil can also be used for itchy scaliness in the ear canal — exfoliate dermatitis in or around the ears, like *Calcarea picrata*, as well as after suppuration, like *Calcarea sulphurica*.

Dr. Cushing wrote in 1884: "My father's house was the home for all poor tramps, as well as ministers, etc. One day he fell into the river and got water in his ears and was quite deaf for months. A blind man called, heard loud conversation, asked the cause, etc., then said that because of all the kindness he had received, he would tell us how to make something that would surely cure him. It was worth a thousand dollars in New York City. We made the oil of mullein, put it in his ears, and he was well in the morning. . . ." Interesting how these

things come about. In one of Hering's books he talks about how it is an old German remedy to help ear conditions.

Enuresis

Another tip that I have recently found to be helpful also comes from Dr. Cushing. Here is what he wrote: "For years we kept a bottle of it (Mullein) and travelled all around town, and it did wonders for people. When I studied medicine and I was practicing, I wanted to know if the mullein was homeopathic, and I made a proving. I developed the symptom of almost constant, but slight involuntary urination, keeping my pants wet". I have used it recently for enuresis. There are various remedies that we use for enuresis — *Causticum*, *Sepia*, etc., various remedies that appear in the *Repertory* with which we have had some success in children. Mullein has this constant involuntary urination, constant dribbling. We sometimes get cases of children, more often little girls than boys, who wet their pants often during the day at school or daycare. It is not an easy thing to cure. The Mullein in low potency homeopathic doses has helped several of those children whom I had not been able to help previously. So you might keep this remedy in mind for daytime involuntary urination. I have not used it in adults yet.

One other symptom of Mullein is a teasing cough at bedtime. When the patient lies down at night and starts to cough, a dry, teasing cough that is hard to stop, Mullein has proved helpful.

Choking

I had an interesting case recently, a patient who came in with a two-year history of feeling as though he were going to choke. There was a constant drip in the back of his throat, in his larynx, that was always annoying him.

He had been to half-a-dozen different allopathic doctors, including ENT specialists. He had sinus surgery in the hopes that it might help. One month later the symptoms returned. He had to clear the mucus out all the time. He was better talking, better eating, and worse swallowing.

I gave him *Lachesis* initially. The sensation of his throat closing, worse from swallowing his own saliva and ameliorated by eating solids, spoke for that remedy. There was perhaps a 10% improvement.

The next remedy that I prescribed was *Arum dracontium*, not *Arum triphyllum*. This latter remedy has clergyman's sore throat and lots of acrid discharge from the nose. In fact, it is my prime remedy when children have a dripping nose and there is redness and excoriation between the nose and upper lip. Whether the excoriation is the result of a dripping nose or a cold sore, use *Arum triphyllum*; it is a wonderful remedy for that characteristic.

In contrast, *Arum dracontium* has a constant need to clear the throat, like *Phosphorus*, which is often useful for this symptom, if other symptoms fit. Well, after *Arum dracontium* this patient improved considerably.

Nasal Discharges

There are various remedies for nasal and post-nasal discharges. For thick yellow discharges, *Pulsatilla*, *Hepar sulphuris*, *Kali bichromicum* and *Hydrastis* all have been very helpful.

I remember questioning a patient last year about his discharge, and he said it was white. Most patients mean clear when they say white. So I always ask "Do you mean like a cooked or uncooked egg white or milky white?"

There are various colour rubrics for discharges throughout the Repertory. For white discharges from the nose, *Kali chloratum* is in the highest degree. *Natrum muriaticum*, *Kali muriaticum*, *Sepia* and others all have white discharges, but think of *Kali chloratum* for white discharges in the respiratory tract. It is listed under white expectoration from the chest and is the only remedy under opaque white discharges.

Proteinuria

The first time I learned of *Kali chloratum* was from Dr. Rood. She talked about it in toxemia of pregnancy, where there is protein in the urine, and I have used it successfully several times in this situation.

I have used this remedy several times for proteinuria in children. This is more frequent in boys than girls, especially after exercise, but there are a few that will have it all the time. It is not always pathological, but you do have to be careful. I routinely send these children to the urologist to make certain there is nothing wrong with the kidneys. Then a dose of *Kali chloratum* will often clear the protein.

Another remedy that has helped me in this same respect is *Ichthyotoxin*, from Eel serum. "Eel serum is to the kidney as *Digitalis* is to the heart" is a quote I recall which describes this remedy's relationship to the kidneys. When the kidney is affected primarily and there is protein in the urine, as in the nephrotic syndrome, think of *Ichthyotoxin*. *Kali chloratum* can also be used to advantage in this same way.

Nasal Obstructions

Another remedy I have used recently that has helped patients with constant post nasal drip is *Antimonium sulphuratum auratum*, the golden sulphuret of antimony. Farrington talked about this in his *Lesser Writings*, and it has helped me.

For chronic nasal obstruction, I find that somewhere along the line the patient will require a dose of *Calcarea carbonica*. Many of these patients cannot breathe when they lie down; they get hooked on nasal drops. *Calcarea carbonica* over time will help them. *Sanguinaria nitrica* is another remedy for chronic nasal obstruction; it also has polyps in the nose. *Calcarea carbonica* is also a great nasal polyp remedy. *Lemna minor* and *Sanguinaria* come to mind for nasal obstruction and nasal polyps.

Influenza

'Flu season is already upon us. The usual *Gelsemium*, *Eupatorium perfoliatum*, and *Oscillocochinum* are quite helpful and find frequent use, but, of course, are insufficient to meet all cases of influenza. What remedy do you think Boericke is describing in the following passage? "Epidemic influenza, especially with violent retching and greatest prostration, when *Arsenicum* has failed. . . . Tired feeling with muscular prostration, worse any exertion. Sore feeling all over, worse in afternoon. Restless at night. Difficulty getting to sleep. Tired feeling in the morning on getting up. Tired feeling in back and neck . . . extreme weakness . . . stiffness."

It is *Sarcrolactic acid*. It has fit many cases of influenza and has been very helpful, especially for the tiredness, muscle aches and soreness described above.

C.F.S.

More recently many people have come in for Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. I have often found *Phosphoric acid*, *Picric acid* and *Sarcrolactic acid* to be useful in helping relieve the overwhelming tiredness characteristic of this syndrome.

Gastro. 'Flu

For gastrointestinal influenzas there are several remedies, such as *Cuprum*, *Cuprum arsenicum* and *Veratrum album*. *Triosteum perfoliatum* is a remedy I have found helpful with the symptom complex of queasiness (a little stomach upset), muscular aches and frontal headaches. These cases display all kinds of mild 'flu symptoms, but they do not develop a full-blown acute 'flu. It has really been helpful for that mild kind of upset stomach and achiness. These symptoms need not always be associated with the 'flu for *Triosteum* to be of benefit. I have seen at least six cases now that it has helped.

Cough Remedy

Here is an unusual cough remedy. I have used a remedy called *Antimonium iodatum*. We most often use the classical remedies for coughs -- *Phosphorus*, *Bryonia*, *Antimonium tartaricum*, etc. However, often, when the cold seems to descend straight down into the chest and is hard to eradicate, I use *Antimonium iodatum*. In my experience the cough is usually dry, the mucous seeming stuck in the airways. The iodide component seems to bring up the moisture from the lungs. It is a great expectorant, just as is the iodide, allopathically.

Severe Hoarseness

Here is an interesting case just recently seen in my office. The patient came with a third recurrence of the same symptom complex, the episodes recurring every two years. Each time a tremendous 'flu initiates the sequence. She feels achy, tired, and hoarse. Before she is very sick, she can hardly talk, with hoarseness, and she knows she is going to be bedridden for six weeks.

She tried the antibiotics before without benefit. She still spent six weeks in bed. I found the remedy *Populus candicans*, the Balm of Gilead. Normally I would have thought of *Causticum* or *Phosphorus*, but neither remedy seemed well indicated.

She took *Populus* and the hoarseness evaporated. All of her symptoms cleared after this remedy, and she has not relapsed since. Keep this in mind: cough with severe hoarseness (typically painless) --- *Populus candicans*.

Neuralgic Pain

Can Homeopathy help chronic disease? Forgive the rhetorical question. I have a 40 year old patient who has had diabetes since childhood. She has had various complications, one of which was a diabetic neuropathy with numbness down the left lower extremity. Her doctors said it could not be helped.

I thought of the sciatica remedies which have pain and numbness, and I gave her *Gnaphalium*. After six

weeks it cured that problem; the feeling in her leg returned.

Another case, an elderly lady, came with the complaint of post-herpetic neuralgia of two years' duration. The after-effects of shingles can cause terrible pain. The pain was over the left side of her head, face and eye. I gave her several remedies without help. Then I used *Zincum valerianum*. It helped within a week. I gave her one dose because I only had a 1M potency, and she got better.

Another patient came in who had both shingles and tic douloureux with terrible, terrible pains. It was again on the left side, and *Zincum valerianum* helped her too. Whether it is just a left sided remedy, I do not know. *Zincum valerianum* is a good remedy to keep in mind for severe neuralgic pain in the face.

Stomach Spasm

A patient called recently saying that he had a spasm in the stomach. "It closes off right here (pointing to the epigastrium)." "I can't eat, drink or do anything. If I do, it comes right back up. It is a terrible spasm. I just need to lie down for a while. Usually after an hour or so it goes away. I get it periodically. The spells came very close together recently."

I made note of the location of the spasm — the junction of the esophagus and the stomach, the cardiac end of the stomach. Well, why it came back to me I do not know, but I remember hearing at the NCIHH summer school of a remedy with cardiospasm. I told the patient that the next time he experienced that spasm he should take. . . . It is right there in Kent's Repertory under the 'swallowing' rubric. It is *Phosphorus*.

When he came for the next appointment, he said that he had another attack, used the *Phosphorus* immediately at the beginning of the attack, and his stomach immediately opened up.

These are a few clinical observations from a few months of my practice. I hope they have been of interest.

* (*Chrom. Kali. Sulph. Ed.*)

Chimps' Choice

by MANDRAKE

Some time ago a report in a popular weekly science journal, *New Scientist*, spoke of the apparent ability of chimpanzees to select certain plants for treatment of their maladies.

Recent analytical studies have shown that certain of the plant species the chimps select may have antibiotic, antifungal and antiworming properties.

Other plants are used by the local people to treat a variety of complaints and there seemed an overlap between the community choice and the chimps' choice.

It so happens in this case that painstaking work by primatologists is leading to investigation of a number of potentially valuable medicinal agents. The concentration of medicinal agent in some plants used is as low as the 6x, so can be related to a 'homoeopathic dose'.



Verbascum thapsus.

