

# Hering's Laws of Cure - The Controversy

**ABSTRACT:** Mr Kasivishwanathan has done a remarkable job in abstracting from the literature available and connecting old and new Masters, to give us in a linear manner and in continuity, the evolution and understanding of Hering's Law. It often appears a roller-coaster ride but stay with it and you will reach clean, open fields. So, I put this as the first article befitting the introduction to this: "Enigma" of Hering's Law...Editor.



Extracted from the Internet by

**TK KASIVISHWANATHAN**

10, Shobha, Plot 149, Road No 9, Wadala, Mumbai-400 031

While surfing the internet for material on Hering's laws on direction of cure, I came across an interesting article by Dr Andre Saine under the caption "Hering's Law: Law, Rule or Dogma." It is an address presented by him at the Second Annual Session of the Homoeopathic Academy of Naturopathic Physicians in Seattle, Washington, on April 16-17, 1988. It is published as an article in the Canadian Academy of Homoeopathy. The full text of the article can be seen at the website - [http://www.homeopathy.ca/articles/hering\\_law.html](http://www.homeopathy.ca/articles/hering_law.html). (Editor: Authors, please note. All articles taken from the internet have to be acknowledged in this way, giving rightful ownership.)

It is a well researched article in which Dr Saine has tried to establish that the so-called Hering's laws of cure cannot be called laws from a scientific point of view. For want of space, only the salient points and the summary of his conclusions in his own words are quoted verbatim to present his viewpoint on this issue.

Quoting: "When first studying homoeopathy, I listened to the teachers and read the "classic" modern works and assumed, like my fellow colleagues, that Hering's law had been an irrefutable fact recognized by Hering and the many succeeding generations of homoeopaths, and that all patients, (All italics and "in quotes" used throughout this paper indicate Saine's own emphasis of pertinent points.) acute and chronic, without an ex-

ception, would, at all times, be cured in the aforementioned direction under careful homoeopathic treatment.

"Later as a practitioner, I carefully applied myself to put the general homoeopathic training I had received to the test. Since then, I have been able to substantiate most but not all of the rules, principles and laws contained in the homoeopathic doctrine promulgated by several generations of homoeopaths."

"So far, however, I have been unable to substantiate Hering's law. Indeed, very rarely do I see, for instance, in a patient with chronic polyarthritis, the symptoms disappearing from the head first and then to the hands and feet. More often, the pain and other joint symptoms disappear in the reverse order of their appearance, even if it is from below upwards. In other words, if the arthritis manifested itself, as it happens at times, first in the knees and then in the ankles, the ankles would get better before the knees." "Or in a patient affected by a complex of essentially functional complaints such as fatigue, anxiety, irritability, difficult digestion, joint pain and acne, rarely would I see the disappearance of the emotional disturbance first, then the poor digestion followed by the joint pain and lastly the acne. With the *similimum* most symptoms begin to improve simultaneously and disappear in the reverse order of their appearance, and not necessarily from

above downwards and from inside outwards. In fact it is not uncommon that in such cases the acne, the last to have appeared, would disappear readily and the emotional state (the oldest symptom) would be the last to completely disappear." "According to Webster's dictionary, a law is defined as a sequence of events that occurs with *unvarying* uniformity whereas a rule permits exceptions and a dogma rests on opinion. Was this lack of confirmation of the said law due to "suppressive" homoeopathic treatment as suggested by a number of theoretical and perhaps dogmatic homoeopaths? If so, why have these so called "purists" not stood up and proven that all their cured cases followed the said law? To my knowledge this proof has not been forthcoming."

"I questioned teachers and colleagues, some with many years of experience. Few could answer my questions and none has been able to substantiate from their own experience without the shadow of a doubt that Hering's law was a true law of nature. It seems that most were in the same situation as me, even the supposed authorities would discuss the matter but in private with the author. It seems that we all had classic cases of cure from above downwards, from within outwards, from more to less important organs and in the reverse order of appearance of symptoms. But these absolutely "perfect" cases were only occasional. The majority of cured cases did not fulfill all the four cited criteria."

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

"Let us briefly review the highlights of what has been so far demonstrated: Between 1828-1843, Hahnemann enunciated his theories of chronic diseases, described his observations and rules about the progression and resolution of these chronic diseases. One key point of his theory is that a skin eruption is the first manifestation of psora, which is the source of all chronic diseases of non-venereal origin. In chronic disease the *presenting* symptoms of the patient ("those ailments which have been most constant and unchanged")

*may aggravate and will disappear in the reverse order of their appearance with the correct anti-psoric remedies in the correct posology. Possibly, old symptoms may return during an anti-psoric treatment. In all diseases, if after a homoeopathic remedy the psychic symptoms are the first to improve or aggravate it, is a most certain sign of curative change. For Hahnemann this inside outward improvement was not a law but rather a most certain sign of curative change. Finally not all diseases progress from outside inwards but certain diseases (psychosomatic diseases) can progress from within outwards."*

"In 1845, Hering enunciated the original observations of Hahnemann as a law of order in a work never to be published. In this law he mentions essentially four points, that "the improvement in *pain* takes place from *above downward*; and in *diseases*, from *within outward*. Chronic diseases if thoroughly cured, *always* terminate in some cutaneous eruption" and lastly "the thorough cure of a widely ramified chronic disease in the organism is *indicated* by the most important organs being first relieved; the affection passes off in the order in which the organs had been affected, the most important being relieved first, the less important next and the skin last". As a reader I do not clearly sense that Hering is officially proclaiming the original observations of Hahnemann as an absolute law, but rather that there is a "law of order" during a curative process. Also I was unable to find Hering or any of his contemporaries referring further to this unpublished work or to a law of direction of cure."

"In 1865, Hering described these observations not as a law but as *Hahnemann's general observations* or as *plain practical rules*. Essentially he emphasizes the proposition that the symptoms should disappear in the reverse order of their appearance during the treatment of chronic psoric diseases."

"In 1875, Hering now discussed only one proposition: that the symptoms will disappear in the reverse order of their appearance. The three other propositions are till now not mentioned at all".

"All the illustrious contemporaries of Hering seem to remain silent on this point, at least from my review of the literature.

"In 1911, Kent, almost, arbitrarily, calls the original observations of Hahnemann "Hering's law".

"Now, with Kent's powerful influence, most modern works and presentations on homoeopathy began to declare Hering's law as an established fact and seemingly assumed that it has been thoroughly verified since the beginning of homoeopathy, although no author, to my knowledge, has so far been able to substantiate what each is repeating from the other. Here is one clear sign which indicates how profoundly the homoeopathic profession of today has been cut off from its original and most essential sources. During the years of its decline in the US, the profession experienced a gradual discontinuity from its original foundation and started to rely more and more on a neo-foundation dating back to the turn of the present century. Each new generation of homoeopaths has readily accepted Hering's law as a perfect law of cure and so unintentionally perpetuated a misleading assumption. For students it is an attractive concept but we clinicians must stand up and report our observations even if they are contrary to the teaching we have received."

"From reviewing the literature, it seems unlikely that the law formulated by Kent in 1911 is a fair representation of Hering's overall understanding of a direction of cure and that neither Kent nor anyone else has been able to clinically demonstrate that the original observations of Hahnemann constituted, in fact, a perfect law of nature. But if we assume, for a moment, that the law formulated by Kent is true, would all symptoms then have to disappear, not only in the reverse order of their appearance, but also from above downwards, from within outwards and from more important to less important organs?"

"To comply with this law it would mean that all diseases to be curable must proceed from outside

inwards, from below upwards and from less important to more important organs. Many acute diseases and a whole list of chronic diseases such as psychosomatic diseases and others that develop from within outwards (for example cases of arthritis followed by psoriasis), or diseases that develop from above downwards, as in certain cases of polyarthritis, would then be theoretically incurable. Or (since we know this not to be the case) they *are* curable, but represent notable exceptions to Kent's formulation of law of direction of cure." "In many cases of chronic disease, the direction of disappearance of symptoms will contradict at least one of the four propositions. I assume that we all agree that the enunciation of a law must be based on impeccable observations. A law, if it is to be called a law, must explain *all* observable phenomena of direction of cure. It is unacceptable to use limited or even selected clinical phenomena to confirm a supposed law."

"This situation appears to exist when certain homoeopaths in their attempts to defend "pure" homoeopathy, subscribe to the position that what is observed as contrary to Hering's law, as formulated by Kent, is only due to poor prescribing, suppressive at times, palliative at best but surely not curative. For them, what is wrong, is not the law but the prescription: "the *simillimum* was not given."

"Personally I use and can daily confirm the original observations of Hahnemann concerning the direction of cure and have found them extremely helpful to evaluate the evolution of diseases or of cure but I have not been able to substantiate these observations as a law and have not yet found a colleague with such substantiation. I use them as plain practical rules."

"Probably by the end of my career, homoeopathy would have become widely accepted. I would then resent it if a group of objective scientists clinically investigate the principles of homoeopathy, and find numerous exceptions not abiding to our

idealistic or dogmatic conception of Hering's law; thus rendering it only "a plain, practical rule". I would similarly resent having a group of scientists saying that for the last hundred or more years the homoeopathic profession has been blindly erring in assuming that Hering's law was an irrefutable fact."

"Hahnemann, who had a thorough understanding of the history of medicine, knew that the only sure way was based on the experimental method. Hering demonstrated the same rigor. Unfortunately, we can not say the same of Kent. Let us now carefully observe and report any facts that would help to perfect Hahnemann's original observations. If a direction of cure can be expressed within the context of a law, then so be it. But until demonstrated otherwise, it should remain "a plain, practical rule". The law, we suspect, still needs to be rightly formulated."

"At present it seems appropriate to refer to these observations as the *rules* of the direction of cure. To refer to these as Hahnemann's or Hering's rules may further prolong the confusion. From my personal experience, it appears that the four rules are not applicable to all cases and that there is a hierarchy among them, ie they do not have equal value. The first indication that a disease is being cured under homoeopathic treatment is that the *presenting* and *reversible* (Many symptoms related to irreversible lesions can not be expected to totally disappear; consequently the more a symptom is related to organic changes, the less likely, or more slowly it will disappear. The greater the irreversibility of the pathology, the greater the symptoms will linger. The practitioner can easily be confused by these important exceptions, which are often not well perceived. Therefore this rule [of symptoms disappearing in the reverse order of appearance] is generally less applicable to symptoms deriving from organic lesions) symptoms of the disease will disappear in the reverse order of their appearance."

"This confirms the observations as pointed out originally and plainly by Hahnemann in *The Chronic Diseases* and later by Hering in 1865 and 1875. This means that during the treatment of patients suffering with chronic diseases of non-venereal origin and also at times with acute diseases, the *presenting* symptoms of the patient's chronic dynamic disease (as opposed to the symptoms resulting essentially from gross error of living) will disappear in the reverse order of their appearance. This rule seems to have supremacy over the other three rules: from more important to the less important organs, from within outwards and from above downwards."

The word "presenting" is here emphasized in order to state clearly that the symptoms that will disappear in the reverse order of their appearance, are only the *presenting* symptoms, that it is not at all expected that every ailment experienced in his past will again be re-experienced. In fact only a few old symptoms /conditions will reappear during a homeopathic treatment, usually the ones unmistakably suppressed by whatever influences. Beside antipathic treatment that will suppress symptoms and normal functions of the organism (perspiration or menses) there are other measures which will cause suppression of symptoms. First, dissimilar diseases, natural or artificial; second, external influences such as exposure to cold temperature, (ie suppressed menses from getting the feet wet); and lastly, internal influences that cause the person to suppress emotions such as anger or grief. This rule concerning cure in the reverse order of appearance of the *presenting and reversible symptoms of the disease* is the most important of the four as it is observable in almost all cases. The importance of this rule is well emphasized by Hering in 1865 when he mentioned: "This rule enables the Hahnemannian artist not only to cure the most obstinate chronic diseases, but also to make a certain prognosis, whether the patient will remain cured or whether the disease will return, like a half-paid creditor, at the first opportunity."

"The second most important (applicable) rule in the hierarchy is that cure will proceed from more important to less important organs. Third in importance is the rule that cure will proceed from within outwards. Fourth, least important and least often observable, the cure will proceed from above downwards. Hahnemann's observation that of all the signs that indicate a small beginning of improvement, the psychic condition of the patient and his general demeanor are the most certain and revealing is seen as the source of the last three rules. "The very beginning of improvement is indicated by a sense of greater ease, composure, mental freedom, higher spirits, and returning naturalness." (paragraph 253). This original observation of Hahnemann, which is verified daily, does not contradict the first rule in any case because *the first sign of improvement* can be and is often different than the symptom that would first disappear".

"Consequent to Hahnemann's theory, (that all diseases, acute and chronic of non-venereal origin, come from the original malady called psora and its first manifestation is a skin eruption) all cases of chronic disease of dynamic origin must develop a skin eruption to be totally cured. As it seems unfeasible to demonstrate, it should at best be used as a working hypothesis and not as a law. For a law to exist it must be demonstrable without exception. Hahnemann had a clear opinion about the role of the physician as theorist when he wrote in the preface to the fourth volume of *The Chronic Diseases*:

"I furnished, indeed, a conjecture about it (on how the cure of diseases is affected), but I did not desire to call it an explanation, ie, a definite explanation of the modus operandi. Nor was this at all necessary, for it is only incumbent upon us to cure similar symptoms correctly and successfully, according to a law of nature (*similia similibus curantur*) which is being constantly confirmed; but not to boast with abstract explanations, while we leave the patients uncured; for that is all which so-called physicians have hitherto accomplished."

To end this thesis, I would like to leave you with the spirit of some pertinent thoughts of Constantine Hering. In 1879, in the last two paragraphs to the preface of his last work, *The Guiding Symptoms of our Materia Medica*, he writes: "It has been my rule through life never to accept anything as true, unless it came as near mathematical proof as possible in its domain of science and in the other hand, never to reject anything as false, unless there was stronger proof of its falsity."

"Some will say, "but so many things - a majority of all observations - will thus remain between the two undecided." So they will and can it be helped? It can, but only by accumulating most careful observations and contributing them to the general fund of knowledge."

#### IN DEFENCE

Surprisingly when I was surfing some nature cure websites, invariably a reference was made to Hering's laws of cure: For instance an iridology expert says as under: "Iridology is in sync with Hering's Law of Cure, which was developed by the Homoeopaths, This law states that 'All cure starts from within out, from the head down, and in the reverse order as the symptoms appeared,' in treating our chronic illnesses. Iridology uses iris analysis to determine how a patient should go about enacting a reversal process which involves a remission of the troubles and illnesses which exist at the present in the patient's body and which have been experienced in the past."

"All cure starts from within out and from the head down and in reverse order as the symptoms first appeared."

This is the process the body goes through when the blood is cleaned and chemically restored through nutrition, improved circulation, rest and proper nerve force.

Iridology will show us what needs to be cleaned. It shows us the nerve energy to every organ in the body. By proper exercise, diet and rest, a healing crisis will come in a matter of weeks.

This healing crisis is the result of an industrious

effort by every organ in the body to eliminate waste products and set the stage for regeneration. Through this constructive process toward health, old tissues are replaced with new. We recognize this crisis usually through a heavy catarrhal elimination in various parts of the body. The iridologist watches for healing signs to come up in the various dark lesions in the iris. When white lines come forth, he knows the patient is being treated properly and is doing the right thing. The experience of going through a healing crisis will seem very much like going through a disease, because the symptoms will be the same, with one very important distinction-elimination.

In the healing crisis, the eliminative processes have become more active because the body has built up energy to eliminate the toxic wastes that have caused its past troubles.

Whatever catarrh and other forms of waste have been stored in the body are now in a dissolved, free-flowing state, and a cleansing, purifying process is underway. When healing lines appear in the intestinal tract area of the iris, every organ begins to show improvement.

These healing lines may be likened to strong pillars used to bolster up a house which probably has been falling apart for some time. By putting in new timber, a stronger foundation is provided. And so it is with the body, new tissue is replacing the old. The crisis usually comes without warning, after nature has shown us how good we can feel. (<http://www.webnat.com/Irid/HeringLaw.asp>)

Russell Swift, DVM, a Classical Homoeopath writes as under: "It is truly amazing that he (Dr Hering) came to these conclusions without the help of laboratory tests or microscopes. Yet nearly 150 years later, modern science supports Dr Hering's conclusions. One can find this in any decent embryology textbook. As an embryo develops, it grows along specific axes in specific directions. These lines of growth and development correspond to Dr Hering's direction of cure. The

maintenance of cells and tissues in the developed body also occurs in these directions. For example, there is an electrical gradient within the body. The brain and other vital organs have a higher electrical charge than the skin and digestive tract. Therefore, nutrients naturally flow from the more important to less important organs ensuring that the vital organs are nourished first. Doesn't that make sense?

The key to applying these rules is to know which one should be seen at a particular time. There is confusion and disagreement over this. The result has been that to a large degree, practitioners have ceased to follow Hering's Law. Recently, through the deeper understanding of embryology and other life sciences, there are doctors who have resolved these problems. As a result, Hering's Law will prove to be invaluable to understand the curative process. While Hering was a devout homoeopath, one may use his Law of Cure to evaluate the success of any type of treatment. For example, a patient has a skin rash which is treated topically with a cream (drug, herb, vitamin, etc). The rash improves 80%, but the patient starts having seizures. Of the two symptoms, the seizures are obviously affecting the more important organ (brain). Any treatment which improves the rash first is a mistake and will lead to more serious problems. The curative process must cure the seizures first. In fact, as the seizures improve, the skin will likely get worse. With an understanding of Hering's Law, we can see that the cure is heading in the right direction and not panic about the exacerbation. Without that information, we might try to treat the worsening rash more aggressively and interfere with the healing.

The beauty of Hering's Law of Cure is that it is applicable to all diseases and all therapies. Now that this Law is supported by the most recent scientific research, it should become the standard to which all therapies are held. Using such an approach will prove which methods of treatment are the most effective and which the most dangerous. The question is whether most health care practitioners are willing to put their system to the

test!

More recently Dr Praful Vijaykar has established that Hering's directions of cure are laws and he has proved them with the help of science of embryology. In all his lectures and cured cases, he has drawn attention to the operation of Hering's law. In an article Dr Leela d' Souza has dealt with this matter exhaustively. I quote the relevant extracts below:-

"I will first attempt to introduce Vijaykar's embryological perspective of Hering's Law of Cure. This may sound a bit technical, but it forms the basis of understanding the different miasmatic expressions in different organs of the body. It would help the homoeopath to make a study of basic process embryological development. Also study basic processes of acute and chronic inflammation from a good pathology text book.

#### *Hering's observation of "Nature's Law of Cure" and Embryological Development*

The human egg after being fertilized begins the process of development into a human foetus. This takes place by cell division and follows a definite pathway of development, which Vijaykar calls the "Nutritive Gradient". The cell division produces various cells for the development of different organs but all these cells arise initially from only 3 morphologically different germinal layers. These are called: 1. The Ectoderm, 2. The Endoderm, 3. The Mesoderm

A fourth specialized cell type develops from the Ectoderm as well, called the Neuro-ectoderm.

The **Ectoderm** gives rise to cells that form tissue of organs that are exposed to the external environment. These include the skin; epithelium of cornea, conjunctiva and iris, lens of the eyes; hair (not roots), nails, teeth enamel, external auditory canal, tympanic membrane, lower part of anal canal, terminal part of male urethra, outer part of vagina; lips, cheeks, gums, outer covering of tonsils.

*These are the outermost tissues, the peripheral tissues of Herings Law of cure.*

The **Endoderm** forms cells that are the inner linings (mucosal linings) of the respiratory system, gastrointestinal system and urinary tracts. Epithelium of the gall bladder and extra-hepatic duct; Endoderm cells of Liver parenchyma. *This layer too, when symptomatic is a peripheral expression of disease but deeper to the Ectoderm.*

The **Mesoderm** develops into two types of tissue:

1. The Mesenchyme which forms the parenchyma lining of all the internal organs; the connective tissues (Blood, lymph, bones, cartilages, muscles, dermis (skin), fascias and coverings of organs. This tissue is the link between the Endoderm epithelium that forms the inner lining of organs, and mesodermal viscera (below).

2. Mesothelium which forms all the internal organs/viscera: Lung parenchyma; kidneys; muscles which form the trachea; Angioblastic tissue products (heart, blood vessels); Viscera coverings (pleura, peritoneum, pericardium, duramater, piamater, spleen, liver (capsule and fibrous tissue).

*These are deeper tissues, important organs affected only after there is suppression at the Ectodermal and Endodermal level.*

The **Neuroectoderm** forms the Nervous system, both central and peripheral.

They also form the secretory cells of the neuro-endocrine glands and neurotransmitters, which are scattered in various organs and tissues all over the body. These secretory cells secrete neurotransmitters or hormones and are classified together under the **APUD** System (Amine Precursor Uptake Decarboxylate System). The APUD system cells are of 3 types:

1. Neural Crest Origin: Thyroid, Adrenal Medulla, Melanoblasts of the Dermis, Cells in the Urogenital tract secreting 5-Hydroxytryptamine.

2. Neuro Ectodermal origin: Hypothalamus, Parathyroid, Pituitary.

Some APUD cells of disputed origin are Islets of Langerhans in the Pancreas.

*Affection of these tissues, is due to long-term suppression and are the "important organs", "inside" and "centre" of Hering's Law of Cure.*

### THE CYCLE OF DEVELOPMENT

This is a short explanation of embryological development that all medical students learn with the study of Anatomy. A homoeopath should get familiar with this early process of development in-utero, as it explains Hering's law of cure beautifully. Also, Dr Vijaykar's concepts then become very appealing.

The development of the embryo is a fixed and well timed process of development which does not change. If it does, it results in anatomical and physiological abnormality in the final expression of the developed child. The first area to form is the Prechordal plate which ultimately represents the head or brain and subsequently the other organs begin to develop. *This denotes a cephalo-caudal (head-tail) axis ie the organs that are of a higher level of importance to organs of lower importance of Hering's law of cure.*

In contrast, the development of the Mesoderm is paraxially, from inside outwards and from the dorsal to the ventral region. This differentiates the internal organs from those more peripheral, and the deeper organs as more important than the superficial ones (*Hering's Law*).

The Ectoderm is the least important when it forms the skin and most important when it forms the brain or neural tissue. Between the two are the Endoderm and Mesoderm. When we understand which organs originate from which tissue, the difference between organs of more importance and ones of lesser importance become clearer.

Based on the embryological understanding explained above the layers of disease progression due to suppression would be:

From: *Ectoderm* (Skin)

→ *Endoderm* (Upper respiratory Tract, Liver Cells, Genito-Urinary Tract, Bile Duct)

→ *Mesoderm/Connective Tissue* (Blood, Lymph glands and system, Bones, Joints, Muscles, Cartilages, Dermis)

→ *Organs of the Mesoderm* (CVS, Heart and Major vessels, Kidneys - parenchyma, Lungs - parenchyma)

→ *Endocrines* (APUD System, Pancreas, Thyroid, Pituitary, Adrenals, Testes, Ovary)

→ *Neural Plate* (Central Nervous System, Sympathetic Nervous System)

→ *Changes in "Genetic Code"* (Here, Vijaykar refers to the affections of the basic structure and functions of the cell due to Genetic modification).

Hering's "**Law of Cure**" hence follows the opposite direction to the cycle of development explained above. The 5 directions of cure are:

1. From organs of more importance to organs of less importance
2. From Above Downwards
3. From Inside to Outside
4. From Centre to Periphery
5. In the Chronological reverse order of disease development.

Dr Vijaykar adds one more corollary to Hering's Law in order to bring in the miasmatic perspective:

6. From a more destructive miasm or destructive process towards one that is less destructive. ie Either from Syphilis to Psora or Syphilis to Syco-sis, or Syco-sis to Psora.

### CONCLUSION

The idea behind this compilation is to present both the viewpoints for impartial understanding of the controversy. Personally it looks as if the science of embryology justifies the calling of Hering's directions of cure as laws. Perhaps like other controversies like Homoeopathy is a placebo effect, there is no medicine in potentised remedy, etc, this will go on. Let us hope that in the near future some authoritative justification for calling Hering's Directions of cure as laws will emerge to set the matters at rest.

**SOURCES:** 1. Hering's Law: Law, Rule or Dogma. Dr Andre Saine, Canadian Academy of Homoeopathy.

2. Perceiving (Hahnemann's) Miasms through Genetics and Embryology— Dr Leela D'Souza, Hpathy Ezine - June, 2005 <http://www.hpathy.com/philosophy/dsouza-miasm4.asp>