

## SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL

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### Homeostasis in the vascular system

This is Part 2 of a paper by T P Crotty “*Homoeopathy and homeostasis in the vascular system*”. Part 1 was covered in the July issue (Vol. 98, p. 181). It described a homeostatic mechanism which enables drugs to cause dual effects in the lateral saphenous vein of the dog. It described experiments which provided ‘prima-facie’ evidence that nor-adrenaline, and then acetylcholine and isoprenaline could cause these effects; one when they stimulate it through its inner surface (the lumen), and an opposite effect through its outer surface (the vasa vasorum, the network of small blood vessels on its surface). It dealt in detail with the significance of the vasa in achieving homeostasis, and proposed a mechanism whereby homeopathic drugs could operate in this balance between the two surfaces; providing both a rationale for the Law of Similars and for the use of low-dosage.

Part 2 has 16 pages and is considerably more complicated. Six pages provide evidence that this homeostatic mechanism operates in other tissues. They describe the dual effect of isoprenaline in the cardiovascular system, and the dual effect of acetylcholine in the coronary artery (the vasa vasorum of the heart). A complex section describes the dual effect of prostaglandin E<sub>1</sub> in the kidney, involving diuresis and anti diuresis (it possesses a peripherally located vascular plexus in its capsule). The central nervous system is another tissue in which there is evidence that drugs cause dual effects and one that has a peripherally located vascular plexus; but the experimental data is considered difficult to interpret in such a complex structure. The author proposes that any tissue with an equivalent structure should be viewed as potentially subject to the same Law of Similars. In the large remaining section, the author examines the rationale of the major principles of homeopathy; of the Law of Similars; of using a low-dose drug; and of using a single drug. He stated “*The Law of Similars operates*

*successfully because a drug diluted below a threshold concentration level undergoes a reversal of its standard effect. It is evident from this that the need for a low dose homoeopathic drug is tightly coupled to the Law of Similars*”.<sup>1</sup>

### Cytostatic and cytotoxic effects of Iscador

“*In vitro effects of *Viscum album* preparations on human fibroblasts and tumour cell lines*” is by G Koopman, F Arwert, AW Eriksson *et al.* Their work is an extension of studies by Ribereau *et al.*, which were mainly conducted on animal tissue. There is a detailed material and methods section: for cell lines used; for Iscador preparations; for determination of cytostatic effects; of cytotoxic effects; and of cloning efficiency. Five figures demonstrate dose-dependent results in a variety of situations.

The cytostatic potentials of Iscador Quercus (Oak), Malus (Apple), and Ulnus (Elm) seemed to be about equal; but Pinus (Pine) was markedly less so. Iscador Quercus was used for further experiments. It was shown to inhibit cell proliferation of fibroblasts and tumour cells, but large differences in sensitivity were observed. Thermal sensitivity was investigated, as was cloning efficiency.

Iscador Quercus had a marked cytotoxic effect on human T-cell leukaemia (MOLT 4 cell line), and there was no evidence that malignant cells were selectively killed (as was assumed by Ulrich & Mechelke). The authors suggest that *in vivo* effects of Iscador may have been brought about by a mechanism differing from *in vitro* activity; perhaps by stimulation of the immune system. The authors discuss two substances with cytostatic and cytotoxic properties which have been isolated from mistletoe: viscotoxins and mistletoe lectin. Which of these two is predominantly responsible in Iscador remains to be elucidated.<sup>2</sup>

### Staphysagria in psychiatry

J Barbancey, the author of this paper, outlined the several quite different images given in various materia medicas, which could be confusing for the student. There is the sad outward appearance; surly children, asthenic impotent

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men, depression, weak memory, and, above all, a common and characteristic feature, erotic obsessions. A second image is the sensitive, irritable heavy smoker with a canine appetite; irascible with loss of self-control, gastro-intestinal colic after supposed attack, disturbed mind with thought disorders, walking and talking restlessly, but whose psycho-sexual excitability is only mentioned secondarily. The author thought it possible to integrate these two images, "resulting in a synthesis which is very useful for dynamic understanding of the patient and more accurate prescribing". So the author considered that, although it may be of help in sexual obsession, it should now be given much less frequently here; but rather in any situation where the patient is unable to spontaneously express emotion, especially indignation, as a result of any kind of vexation, injustice, humiliation, emotional rejection etc. Another formulation, by von Metzger, is quoted: "Staphysagria has a relation with a great confusion under the burden of emotions, making one totally unable, in spite of being conscious of one's problems, to have proper control over them".

Barbancy had been much impressed by the quick and powerful action of the drug: "not so much by the sedative and soothing effect, at least in the beginning - but by the disinhibiting effect upon the guiding symptom: consequences of emotional stresses, perceived but neither expressed nor externalized". Several examples follow. The three most striking examples of psychological transformation are spontaneous (and sometimes picturesque) testimonies of the patients themselves. The author ends with a note of caution: "One must be careful when giving the prescription (potency, frequency of repetition) to estimate the reactional possibilities of the patient. It is sometimes necessary to wait before any further medicinal or psychotherapeutic intervention, allowing time for the full action of Staphysagria, in order to avoid any risk of auto-aggressive reactions, sudden and violent attack against other people or a depressive decompensation".<sup>3</sup>

## Plant drugs in children's diseases

"Background to the plant drugs in children's diseases" by Frank Bodman is a lecture given at the Postgraduate Intensive Course in February 1977, reproduced here for the 10th anniversary of his death; together with a biographical sketch.

The drugs which Bodman dealt with in his lecture are the ten plant drugs mentioned in Borland's Children's Types: *Pulsatilla*, *Lycopodium*, *Thuja*, *Ignatia*, *Stramonium*, *Aethusa*, *Capsicum*, *Chamomilla*, *Abrotanum* and *Cina*. The author gave botanical details; and descriptions, often colourful, of their origins and first use. In 1542, the ships of Cartier's expedition were frozen in ice in the St Lawrence; but the sailors' scurvy was eventually cured with the juice of a tree, *Thuja occidentalis*. Some sailors even alleged that it cured their syphilis (considered at the time to be due to the same infective agent as gonorrhoea). Cartier brought it home to Paris; the first American tree to be grown in Europe. Dudgeon chewed a little of the green cone while taking a walk, and over the course of the next week he

produced a picture of acute gonorrhoea. Then it was a Jesuit who first brought the seeds of *Strychnos ignatia* from the Philippines to the notice of Portuguese merchants. He called them Fabia St Ignatia or St Ignatius' beans, in honour of the founder of his order.

There were some interesting comments. *Pulsatilla* is number one in English's list of 200 drugs prescribed by a group in one week in 1975 (95 times). In the index of clinical cases collected for the Homoeopathic Society 75 years earlier, it was prescribed for 49 different disorders. *Lycopodium* was the next most frequently prescribed in English's investigation. Margaret Tyler used to say that to become a rapid and correct prescriber there are a dozen drugs that one needs to make friends with, so as to be able to recognize them with a minimum of glances and questioning, and *Lycopodium* is one of them. Clarke warns of the frequency of aggravations after high potencies of *Lycopodium*, which was foreseen by Hahnemann, who recommended *Pulsatilla*, *Causticum* or *Coffea* to counter the ill effects as required. Many homeopaths have found that repetition of a dose of *Lycopodium* is much less effective than the first.

At the end of several of the drugs there is a brief picture of the relevant child. The *Thuja* child is small, tends to subnormality, with bad teeth due to defects of enamel. *Ignatia* is indicated for the highly strung, sensitive, bright, precocious child; doing well at school, but pushed too hard by parents or teachers. The *Aethusa* child has a characteristic face, according to Nash: sunken, with a marked linear crease and pearly white upper lip. Kent describes it as a Hippocratic face. The unfortunate *Capsicum* child is inconsolable on admission to hospital; fat, flabby, red-faced; lazy, obstinate, very clumsy, dull and slow to learn, with a poor memory. The marasmic, hungry *Abrotanum* craves bread and milk, and is extremely cross and ill natured, with a cruel, sadistic streak. The *Cina* child is tense, with circumscribed redness of cheeks, violent rubbing of the nose, and excessive hunger even after a full meal. Borland said that if he found a yawning child, picking its nose, he always explored the possibility of it being a *Cina* and very often it was. Tyler said that the *Cina* child cannot be punished because it goes into a convulsion.<sup>4</sup>

## Biographical sketch

Francis Hervey Bodman, usually known as Frank, was born in 1900. His family had two strong strains: homeopathic (father and grandfather were homeopaths), and religious (Exclusive Brethren). Frank achieved considerable eminence in the former, especially in the psychiatric field, but broke with the latter. As a house physician at the London Homoeopathic Hospital, he came under the influence of Douglas Borland and Margery Blackie. The Homoeopathic Hospital in Bristol opened in 1925, largely through his influence. His later appointments included Director of the Bristol Child Guidance Clinic; consultant psychiatrist at Kingswood Training School and Remand Centre; and Director of the Somerset County Council Child Guidance Group. Then in 1956 he was elected President of the Faculty. Together with Sir John Weir, he had played

a vital part in the transition of the British Homoeopathic Society into the Faculty in 1950, and they were among those who conducted the negotiations with the Minister of Health which ensured the continuing future of the London and provincial homoeopathic hospitals within the National Health Service.<sup>5</sup>

## Book review

**Homeopathic Medicine Today.** A Modern Course of Study

By Trevor M Cook

The author, a pharmaceutical chemist, was formerly Managing Director of Nelsons; then President of Dolisos, the US manufacturer of homeopathic medicines. In 1990, he held several posts in the US homeopathic world, including membership of the US Pharmacopoeia Convention. His declared aim in the preface of his book was "to present homeopathy as a modern dynamic and flexible therapy which is alert to current medical and scientific developments". The reviewer considered that he had done just that, with an excellent book. It is a well-thought-out presentation of homeopathy; informative, without attempting to teach homeopathic practice. Two chapters stand out: homeopathic pharmacy, not surprisingly, is given a concise exposition;

while the chapter on research and development would be especially important for any medical practitioner newly interested in homeopathy, one group at whom the book is especially aimed. The reviewer was not so impressed with the dropping of the diphthong in favour of the American spelling of 'Homeopathy', stating "Many on this side of the Atlantic will object to this (as I do) but can be assured that the excellent style and use of the British language makes for comfortable reading"! In conclusion, he considered that "it should certainly be on the bookshelves of post-graduate medical centres whose libraries are enlightened enough to have book space for complementary medicine".<sup>6</sup>

## References

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- 5 Bodman FH. Biographical sketch. *Br Hom J* 1990; **79**: 52–54.
- 6 Cook TM. Book review: homeopathy today. A modern course of study. *Br Hom J* 1990; **79**: 60–61.