

BRIEF REVIEW OF THE SNAKE REMEDIES*

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There are eight homoeopathic remedies made from the venom of as many different snakes. Although there are more than eight provings of snake venom, these other provings are very fragmentary, and the remedies are not in general use. However, of those remedies with which we are more or less familiar *Lachesis* comes to mind first, followed by *Crotalus horridus*, *Vipera*, *Elaps*, *Bothrops*, *Naja*, *Cenchrus contortrix*, and *Bungarus fasciatus*. The order depending upon which ones have given you good results in practice.

Snake venoms are composed of mixture in varying proportions of (1) protein substance, (2) mucus and debris of epithelial cells, (3) fatty matter, (4) salts such as calcium chloride, ammonia and magnesium phosphate and others. The specific gravity varies from 1.030 to 1.050. The toxin will keep for years if dried and kept in the dark, but readily decomposes when left in the fluid state.

Generally speaking, the toxic part of the snake venom is composed of two primary elements: the hematoxins, and the neurotoxins. The different reactions exhibited by people to snake venom is due to the varying amounts of these two basic ingredients. The venom varies both in toxicity and in the kind of toxins present in the different snakes. In fact within the same species many variations occur. Young snake venom (drop for drop) is far more potent than that of an older snake. There is also a seasonal variation in the strength of the toxin within the same snake depending upon its activity.

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The hematoxins create a destructive action on the red blood cells, tissues, and produces extensive swellings, and extravasations. This would be like the provings of *Lachesis*, *Crotalus horridus*, and *Bothrops*. The hematoxins can again be subdivided into those which coagulate the blood, and those which produce hemorrhage and prevent coagulation. *Lachesis*, *Elaps*, and *Vipera* are examples of these extremes.

On the other hand, the neurotoxins produce little swelling, but attack the nerve centres, especially the motor nerves, the sympathetic system, and the phrenic nerve. This toxin produces a paralysis of various kinds such as seen in the provings of *Naja*, *Cenchrus contortrix*, and *Elaps*. *Elaps*, or coral snake, is considered a degenerate of the cobra family and secretes a powerful neurotoxin. Chemically, there is present some hydrocyanic acid. It is remarkable how closely the provings of *Elaps* and *Hydrocyanic acid* parallel each other in the neurological symptoms. The potentized venom of *Bungarus fasciatus* produces symptoms closely resembling severe bulbar poliomyelitis with respiratory failure. Histologically the tissue findings are much the same as seen in polioencephalitis.

To digress a moment there is an evolutionary theory concerning the development of the snake venom from the parotid gland in snakes. Far back in the eons of time snakes did not have the powerful toxins of today but used the secretions of the parotid gland to digest their prey. In other words there is present in snake venom today many of these digestive enzymes which may explain the necrotic action on tissue and blood cells. In line with this theory chemical experiments have found four distinct fermentation—like substances present in snake venom. As would be expected these substances vary from one snake species to another.

The first ferment attacks the fibrin and is considered the blood coagulating factor. The second is a proteolytic enzyme which softens and dissolves muscle tissue. The third is a diastatic enzyme which activates the pancreatic juice enabling it to attack

forcefully the albuminoids. The fourth is a lipolytic enzyme having a fat dissolving action, which splits lecithin and produces fatty degeneration of the liver.

Most venoms contain what is called a "spreading factor" which influences the speed with which the venom spreads throughout the system of a person. A fairly recent study using Bothrops and Crotalus venom indicated that the spreading action was due to the liberation of histamine. It is well known that histamine favours the migration of colloidal particles into the cutaneous tissue.

The great power for good, present in potentized snake venom, was impressed upon me by the case of L.M. She is a chubby cherub of 3½ years. When first seen in October she weighed 36½ pounds and was 39½ inches tall. Upon examination I found a definite mitral systolic murmur, a fast pulse, the residue of a mild tonsillitis, and severe atonic constipation. The mother stated that L. M. had been constipated since she was a year old. The only mental symptom elicited at this time was her fear of sleeping alone or of being alone. *Naja trip.* 1M was prescribed.

Two weeks later her mother stated she was sleeping alone, and that much of her fatigue and lethargy was gone. I also found to my amazement that the heart murmur was gone, but the pulse was still fast. Placebo was given.

By the end of December there was no sign of heart murmur, but the constipation required several remedies which helped but did not clear up the condition. In April the systolic heart murmur was again audible and *Naja trip.* 10M was prescribed which has cleared up both the constipation and the aortic systolic murmur. There had been no further return of these symptoms when I checked the little girl a week ago. It would be interesting to have had several electrocardiograms of this patient to have seen what changes may have occurred since the first prescription. Due to the circumstances of the family I did not request it.

My father* said in the past year he has prescribed *Naja* in about 25 cases. Most of the patients had congestions in the

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chest or heart, and, when indicated, the results were very encouraging.

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DISCUSSION

Dr. A.H. Grimmer (Chicago, Illinois) : Mr. Chairman, I want to thank Dr. Nieswander for bringing to our attention these valuable remedies that come from the snake poisons. It has been said that if we knew all about the serpent venoms we might be able to heal almost anything that flesh is heir to.

I hardly think they cover so broad a field, but they certainly do cover a multitude of complaints, and always very serious complaints, such as blood changes, nerve imbalance, and many conditions that imperil life.

Elaps is a very valuable remedy in certain types of hemorrhagic conditions, as well as *Lachesis*, but *Elaps* is characteristic of the large black clots that appear, whereas *Lachesis* does not have the black clots ; or, if there are clots at all, they are very small. It is mostly liquid blood.

The tendency of the *Lachesis* venom is to decompose the blood so that it will not clot, or to make the clots very much smaller.

Crotalus horridus produces dark clots with liquid blood, and is probably among the most venomous of these poisons. It has done some very spectacular work in low forms of fever. In one epidemic many years ago, when Yellow Fever was still not under control, the Southland found that *Crotalus horridus* was the epidemic remedy and that it made some very brilliant cures in a great many cases, reducing deaths from Yellow Fever to a minimum.

I saw an exhibition of what *Crotalus horridus* can do. A girl in Trinidad, B.W.I., an East Indian girl, whose family was very strongly homoeopathically inclined, was dying with a tubercular hemorrhage. In fact, she had a terminal case of tuberculosis. It was stated that she was spitting up clots of blood by the basinful.

There was nothing the allopathic doctors could do for her. She had had good allopathic attention, with injections of serum and calcium and vitamin K and other things.

They wired me for a remedy, and I wired back telling them to give her *Crotalus horridus* 30., which they did. The girl is alive today. That was four or five years ago, and she is perfectly well. Not only did the hemorrhaging stop, but the cavernous lungs healed. She is getting along very well.

Dr. William P. Stockton (Glendale, California) : I would like to report a case of necrosis of the mandible and lower jaw. The patient was a child of five, referred to me from an allopath, really an osteopath, who had been swabbing the child's mouth with dyes and getting nowhere. The child was drooling at the mouth and constantly whimpering from pain. In the necrotic area the first and second deciduous molars were involved ; the necrosis extended down into the mandible.

[X-rays showed involvement of the crown of the second bicuspid. We actually picked the second deciduous molar out by our fingers.

I remembered that Dr. Leppert used to say, "What do you do, when you do curettage?" I didn't know at first, but I soon learned. I would not even let the child bite on the side for fear she would fracture the mandible.

Under *Lachesis* the child responded in two weeks' time and all suppuration ceased. New blood was thrown out from the peripheral area and within one month the field filled in with healthy tissue. In six weeks' time there was no evidence of anything except extreme loss of bone in that area, and no evidence of any infection. I used no mouth washes or anything like that. *Lachesis* did it all.

Dr. Wilbur K. Bond (Greensfork, Indiana) : *Lachesis* is more left-sided and tends to be blue, whereas *Crotalus horridus* is more right-sided and tends to be yellow. Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between the two.

Since we discussed the subject of cancer today, I thought I might tell you of a lady patient who has cancer of the left breast. She is doing fine on *Lachesis*. Every time the breast swelled up she would pick open the nodule with a needle ; when it bled it relieved her pain. She had been on *Lachesis* from the C.M. to the D.M. and we had never been able to control her pain very well. Finally we dropped back to *Lachesis* 1M and kept her on it indefinitely. She is now completely free of pain, and I believe the lesion is disappearing in the breast.

That is merely one small instance to show what our remedies can do, especially snake venoms for cancerous conditions.

Dr. Neiswander (Closing) : I want to thank all of you for your contribution and discussion.

In had one elderly woman with a far-advanced carcinoma of the left breast. She was put on *Lachesis*, and it helped to control her pain, but the lesion was too far advanced for the *Lachesis* to have any curative effect. She had an ucler about 3 cm. in diameter when I saw her. The pain was controlled, but not the cancer.

[*Courtesy* : The Homoeopathic Recorder, Sept., 1950]

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