



Learn a remedy through cases-*Staphysagria*: Liberating Balm for the mortified, oppressed and suppressed

"Homoeopathic remedies do not evolve, but our understanding of their uses does. *Staphysagria* is not a particularly well-known remedy and consequently not widely used by most Homoeopaths. It has never been granted the rank of 'polycrest' or 'constitutional remedy', yet perhaps it deserves a higher rank than presently accorded to it." That is how Dr Karl Robinson commenced his well-thought out article - "*Staphysagria*: evolution of a remedy", replete with beautiful cases. The essay was written as far back as 1982. Though several years have elapsed, this statement is still substantially true as one does not easily recognize that remedy in everyday practice. It has to be prescribed *more on its essence* than on symptoms.

Dr Hering wrote that the remedy produced "Hypochondriasis; apathy; weak memory; caused by *unmerited* insults, sexual excesses or by persistently dwelling on sexual subjects. Suffering from pride, envy or chagrin. Fretful peevishness, with excessive ill humor. Very sensitive to least impression; least word that seems wrong hurts her very much." Clarke was more specific "*Staphysagria* is a remedy for anger and the effects of anger, especially if the indignation cannot have its natural expression." It is applicable to a gentleman who was "insulted and being too dignified to fight, swallowed the wrath and went home sick, trembling and exhausted". Kent says "He goes home and suffers; he does not speak it out, but controls it and then suffers from it." Such gentlemen are rare nowadays. It is rather more suited to situations where the patient is unable to ex-

press his/her anger or other emotions of displeasure. If involved in an argument or confrontation, they can't respond - they can become speechless. They may tremble when angry. Many a time the insults may be unmerited. The important keynote is that they are worse from suppression of anger and get physical pathology and aggravation of all symptoms from suppression.

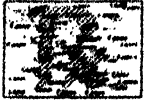
As another author expresses it (discussed later) the *Staphysagria* patients exhibit "much helplessness against emotional challenges." Similarly as Vithoulkas points out that "Problems of *Staphysagria* begin when the person does not allow the natural outlets of the emotions to be expressed. Women become passive with a kind of sweetness. There is niceness, a sensitivity. They prefer to please rather than hurt, to be gentle even though inside they suffer a lot." Thus it is an excellent remedy for ailments from anger not fully expressed or partially expressed. Such situations are more common in army and police establishments where subordinates would have to implicitly obey their superiors and put up with their abuses and taunts, daughters-in-law from *Anacardium* mother in laws or husbands or widows or divorcees who have to live with relations under humiliating circumstances or present day IT professionals drawing fat salary but who get unceremoniously thrown out of job overnight with termination notices, and of course children who have stepmothers. Students subject to ragging or being bullied by superiors. The common thread is: DIGNITY or honour is wounded and at stake in these situations.

Often it is not evident in patients when they come for treatment and will come out only their life situation is gently and fully explored. One woman completely stopped showing her sexual feelings, because when she was newly married, she expressed her sexual desire for her husband when he came home from work. He



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made a joke about her amorous advances. That was too much for her. It was not anger but insult to her dignity as a woman and wife. It is observed from cases that women need more of this remedy than men. The following cases demonstrate the different situations where this remedy is curative.

CASE 1:

An extremely beautiful woman, aged 36, came to Dr Karl Robinson complaining of constant nausea, recurrent headaches, diarrhoea and loss of appetite. She lost 10 lbs in a month. She was also terribly depressed and admitted to crying when alone. Her life situation was one of physical abuse at the hands of her husband and later on she had to raise her children for 10 years on her own. "I have allowed people to impose on me. I stayed with my husband because I loved him. He stayed because I was his shield and he pushed me around and beat me. I thought that he would change." She was also unhappy with her parents who borrowed money from her frequently and when she wanted some loan from them, they were mean to talk of her executing a promissory note for the loan. Further when she was to appear for a job interview, she wanted the children to help her with the dishes but the boys started fighting. This time she exploded; on another occasion fed up with her husband she wanted him to leave her but he wouldn't go. She got so frustrated that she tore her dress. This case shows that these patients though suppress their emotions, can *explode into violent rage*, but such outbursts are infrequent and usually months apart and in between they continue to be sweet; their pent up anger and damage to their self respect and dignity is not fully ventilated.

The history further revealed that she was married six times and went into each marriage with full commitment but her husbands, she said, drained her completely and hurt her too much. She also said that she married her sixth husband under duress as her would-be mother-in-law made a surprise announcement in a get-together, without her consent and made her place the ring on her

future husband's finger. Though her husband was nice and worked hard to support her and the children, it did not work out. He was also a dullard.

She presented a perfect picture of *Staphysagria* and was given a dose of that in 200th potency. A day later, she said that she was much better and less depressed. After 2 weeks she reported that she was doing very well; not only that all her symptoms disappeared but she was also able to say *no* to her husband when he approached her and wanted to come back. Before that remedy she could have given in and allowed to be used as a doormat.

-KARL ROBINSON

CASE 2:

A 40-year-old woman consulted for her rectal bleeding but she did not have piles. A probe into the causation showed that 10 months earlier the patient had an unpleasant confrontation with her landlord. He had wrongfully accused her and her husband of using drugs for which she reacted with fury, as the allegations were totally false and motivated and the accusations were very demeaning to her, as she had never used any illicit drug in her entire life. The landlord similarly accused her of other wrong doings. This was a case of wounded dignity, which aroused the anger in the patient resulting in rectal bleeding; this was controlled by allopathic drugs. After 10 months the bleeding recurred, this time following an incident involving her daughter, who was bullied and roughed up by some older girls in school. The patient was very furious, boiling literally with rage and revenge but there was no way she could give vent to her pent up anger. The discharge of anger was in the form of resumption of her rectal bleeding. The doctor prescribed *Staph 30* on the symptom of suppressed and not fully ventilated anger and in a few hours the patient said, "I felt very relaxed and sleepy". About her anger she said, "I couldn't even think of it any more. It was as though it had passed a long, long time ago and was not relevant." Though the remedy dissipated her anger, it took 4 days for the rectal bleeding to stop. Dr Robinson adds that during this time, an interesting thing



occurred. The rectum, which was painless till then, became *painful* temporarily under the influence of the medicine and passed off some days later. (That was the aggravation of the medicine). "The point in this case was that the patient had not been suppressing her anger, either in the first or the second incident. However, she was unable to fully release it." Hence the rectal bleeding to complete it. -KARL ROBINSON

A similar situation where this remedy would be useful is when there is fear and its repression. The fear may be of operation or attempted rape etc. Here is such a case.

CASE 3:

A 47 year old woman with uterine cancer was to undergo hysterectomy in a few weeks. In the interview she related her extreme fear and dread of the approaching operation; she was afraid of being "maimed and mutilated." She was a very repressed lady and said with great bitterness "I resent this whole thing - cancer and everything" She was given a dose of *Staph 30*. On that night she experienced unbearable fear, the kind of "eyes were bulging with terror" like feeling which nothing could alleviate. In the next two days she became calmer and could go through her operation with no fear.

- KARL ROBINSON

Repressed feelings of anger and frustration in children of divorced parents where the children have to live with one or the other parent or other relatives can lead to their becoming *Anacardium* (violent) personality (See the cases under *Anacardium* article) or *Staph* patients (Suppressed).

CASE 4:

The parents of a 7-year-old boy were divorced and he was living with his father and stepmother. On a visit, his mother was concerned over the reports of "seething anger" observed in her son and hence consulted Dr Robinson. When directly asked as to whether he got angry, he denied it but his manner and behaviour (pursing of lips) betrayed it and when asked as to what did

he do when he was angry, he said that he went to his room and worked it out. That was the way his father advised him to handle his anger. Dr Robinson therefore prescribed *Staph 200* for anger not fully expressed. On the following day, his mother reported that the boy exploded into a violent rage on her without any provocation. After that episode he became more calm and relaxed, more happy and more of a child. His pursing of his lips also ceased. - KARL ROBINSON

CASE 5:

An 11-year-old boy was brought to Vithoulkas. He was intelligent, friendly and outgoing until he went to a school at the age of 6. By the second year itself it was noticed that he was falling behind in his studies. By the time the boy was brought for treatment he appeared to be mentally retarded. He had missed 3 full years in school. His behaviour was troublesome and he would hit his mother so much that Vithoulkas initially prescribed *Stramonium* without much effect. On probing the life situation, Vithoulkas noticed that the turning point occurred when he was admitted into the school. At that time his parents used to quarrel a lot among themselves, which affected the child and made him angry. Secondly, the boy was a natural left hander but the school teacher forced him to write with his right hand, which also affected the child very much and his anger at being treated unsympathetically had to be suppressed as he could not fight against his teacher or his parents. This accounted for his falling behind in his studies and missing 3 years in school. Vithoulkas therefore prescribed *Staph* (doses not stated) and the boy improved in his mental facilities rapidly and was not only able to keep up with his school work but also make up for the lost years.

- GEORGE VITHOULKAS- The Essence of Materia Medica

Corrie Hiwat draws attention to a similar situation where a classmate blames his friend or another for breaking the window in self-protection; this boy is unable to defend and has to put up with punishment and loss of



self-respect. In that case also *Staph* helps.

Staphysagria has a symptom "Head feels like a block of wood, like a ball inside the forehead or in occiput. Here is a case, which produced an identical symptom along with others and was cured with this remedy.

CASE 6:

An 8-year-old boy was brought for treatment for nocturnal enuresis. He used to go into sound sleep in the early part of the night so deep that he did not hear even the door bell ringing, a situation which is characteristic of *Kreosote*. He used to get headaches and during such episodes he was very restless, which also broadly conformed to the above remedy. But the patient sucked his right thumb and also handled his genitals simultaneously, which did not contra indicate *Kreosote*; after administering that remedy other symptoms came up which pointed to *Staph*.

He had headache in a particular spot in his forehead as if a ball was fixed there. It also transpired that the boy regularly masturbated in his bed at night. The remedy is good for sexual excesses and onanism. *Staph* was prescribed in varying potencies and he was cured.

- GV KELLER FROM Dr K S Srinivasan's Quarterly Digest, Sept 1991.

Vithoulkas says that "*Staphysagria* patients are very easily excited. All five senses can be aroused to fever pitch. This, coupled with their fear of intimacy, naturally leads to strong tendency to masturbation for which *Staph* is famous. The *Staphysagria* patient's fantasy reaches such a great intensity that it demands an outlet so the patient satisfies it by masturbation."

CASE 7:

A 35 year pleasant gentleman, made friends easily, but had a chronic reluctance to be involved in a romantic affair. It was not that he was a homosexual; but he feared intimacy. He admitted to Vithoulkas that his major weakness was masturbation; he masturbated compulsively from the age of 7. Though later he realized that it

was bad and decided to control that urge, his will was weak and he continued to indulge in that habit. That habit had become a tremendous problem for him, which prevented him from having a loving relationship with the opposite sex. *Staph* cured him.

- VITHOULKAS- ESSENCE OF MATERIA MEDICA

CASE 8:

A 31-year-old woman consulted Dr Bottger for palpitation- feared she would suffer an infarct. It all started after she discovered that her husband was having an affair. Clinical investigations heart - NAD. When the patient expressed her anger and annoyance at his behaviour to her husband, he did not even react. This worsened the situation, and she brooded thereafter for a long time over her own outrage as if she had a bad conscience! Her mortification was not expressed fully. On that, prescribed *Staph* in varying potencies over a few months. The interesting part of the case is that her husband came again to her for reconciliation. Her reaction was now not one of mortification or not knowing what to do or how to react. She told him: "Show me again that you love me and take me in your arms." This is a positive *but an unusual reaction* from a woman scorned. But the remedy enabled her to absorb the mortification properly without endangering her health and also making a choice of forgiving her husband for his acts provided he demonstrated his abiding love for her.

- H E BOTTGGER- *Staphysaria*, a medicine for active persons- Quarterly Digest of Dr K S Srinivasan. Sept 1991

CASE 9:

A 9 year-old boy was brought by his grandfather for his inability to concentrate on his studies. He was earlier very good at his studies. The doctor knew the mother of the boy well; she was twice married and twice divorced. The boy was from the first marriage and was brought up by this grandfather. That was sufficient reason for the boy's behaviour problems. However, this



lack of concentration was observed only recently. The doctor therefore probed into the school atmosphere for any possible reason. It transpired that this boy had a crush on one teacher; he could not therefore tolerate the snide observations of his other classmates against that teacher. "I feel like boxing them." When he said that *his voice was low and inaudible*. When asked as to why he could not tell the concerned boys how stupid they were about the teacher, he replied "I cannot." This is a typical example of being *helpless* against emotional challenges. *Staph 30* was prescribed and was repeated in infrequent intervals and then raised to 200 and repeated over 4 months, whenever the boy was restless and concentration was lagging. One year's treatment completely righted him.

In both the above cases the remedy picture was not one of Hypochondriasis; sexuality also played a role in a broader sense ie the relationship towards the other sex. The young woman did not feel the relationship was right with her husband and hence her body was protesting with palpitations and asking her to take action. The boy was crazy over his teacher and his inability to verbally express his resentment and anger resulted in lagging behind in his studies. *Staph* produced a positive mental attitude and enabled to make a choice or select an action appropriate to deal with the circumstances where earlier the patients felt helpless. "The young woman developed a positive attitude and forgave her husband and could now ask him to demonstrate his love for her convincingly, if he wanted to return to her. The boy did not feel the need to box his other classmates and found the right attitude in his childish fancies so that he could not be any more teased by them."

- BOTTGER

Staphysagria is an important remedy for victims of sexual or physical abuse where the victim's anger is suppressed or are unable to express their anger fully.

CASE 10: PTSD Incest survivors

A 32 year-old woman came for the severe depression she had for the past several years. She had attempted suicide several times. Her physician had put her on Valium at the age of 12 and another anti-depressant later. With great difficulty her psychiatrist weaned her away from such anti-depressant and referred her to this Homoeopath. After discontinuing the drug, she remembered her rape in her childhood by her parents and uncle, who were members of a satanic cult. She remembered having been continuously abused from infancy to her tenth year. She had been anorexic for eight years since age 19 and had genital herpes. Because of the abuse she started losing control over her muscles from the feet up; her toes would curl up and her legs would become rigid. She was in a wheel chair from her 3rd standard and all her symptoms were worse by touch. At the age of 25 she was diagnosed as having Sagawa's dystonia and was successfully treated with allopathic medicines. At the time of homoeopathic consultation she could walk but with an ataxic gait. It was obvious that her present complaint was a passive resistance to a massive abuse and her feelings were suppressed and introverted. When she discontinued the anti-depressants she started seething with anger against her abusers, which was all along suppressed. She was greatly benefited by *Staphysagria 200*. It improved her self-esteem and depression and helped her to direct her anger outward. She was on that remedy for some more time and later she was given *Hellebores*. Then the doctor lost touch with her as he moved away from that place.

-SIDNEY SKINNER JAIH SUMMER 1993 ISSUE

Recovery or cure is freedom and increased choices, says one homoeopath. Homoeopathic remedies enable the victims of abuse from hurting themselves and to get out of abusive relationships and stop losing time. Survivors may be enabled to give vent to their suppressed anger more constructively and in some cases may forgive their abusers and get on with their life's goals and objectives.

CASE 11:



A middle aged woman consulted for multiple physical complaints, severe menstrual cramps that made her scream and writhe on the floor in agony with extreme rage. She had suicidal tendencies. She disclosed a history of gang rapes by her brother and his friends as a child. She told all this smiling, which was a façade. Because of the suppressed anger and mortification she suffered for a long time she was prescribed *Staphysagria* in high potency. (The potency not indicated) The one dose was curative of her cramps and other physical complaints including blackouts and vertigo, pain in GIT and pain during sex or masturbation, nightmares and low self-esteem and suicidal tendencies. She terminated her relationship with her fiancée (this is the freedom of choice which one gets after treatment). The remedy was repeated as and when needed. Over the next two years she developed a strong sense of self, had a satisfying career and started a loving relationship. It was the only remedy she needed to come out of her trauma of abuse and lead a healthy life.

-KACENKA HRUBY JAIH summer 1993

CASE 12:

Another incest survivor, a young woman, an alcoholic, consulted for her frequent desires to commit suicide and inflict self-injury, either by cutting herself or smashing her hands against walls. The patient had an exterior pleasant manner but one could easily see the submerged angry edge. She also had insomnia and her contacts with others or her family were painful, as she felt powerless and unable to express herself. She was prescribed *Staphysagria* 30 and asked to join Alcoholics Anonymous for her alcoholism. And take another dose of the same remedy, whenever she was having insomnia or was about to injure herself. After two months she was sober and not drinking and said that her only complaint was that she felt hatred for all people, and felt a severe sense of isolation; she also seethed with rage, which she could barely control. This was in marked contrast to her first visit where she appeared very sweet. The symptoms now presented called for a

change of remedy and the doctor prescribed *Anacardium* to complete the cure.

-KACENKA HRUBY JAIH summer 1993

CASE 13:

A 48 year old lady consulted Dr Robinson for severe ear problems; they started as earaches at the age of 6 and developed into chronic ear infections; though she had two operations the ear infections continued. The ears itched and head felt hollow as if a pipe went through it. There was a chronic odourless but thick and yellow discharge. In her left ear, she felt a sensation as if a plug was lodged in there. She had constant pain in the ears. The patient appeared to be a *Pulsatilla* type but that remedy brought only a minimal relief. After 3 months when her life situation was explored, she reluctantly told about an attempt at incest with her at the age of 9, which frightened her terribly. Though she said that she had worked out that anger since then, the doctor suspected that it was not fully expressed. Hence she was given *Staph* 1M one dose and shortly thereafter the lady said that she felt much better. After a month she complained of some spasmodic pain and the remedy was repeated in 10M potency one dose, and she continued to improve under that dose for another 3 months, then a dose in 50M cured her completely of her troubles and a follow-up after one year showed that she continued to remain free of the problem. -KARL ROBINSON

CASE 14:

A 33 year old woman and a mother of two, was divorced and had remarried. Her oldest son lived with her ex-husband and without telling her he moved to another city. She could find it out only through great efforts, but virtually lost contact with her son. This made her angry at her ex-husband for cheating her. Her current husband was an alcoholic and was abusing her. He also attended to their business, which was therefore failing. The patient said that she believed strongly in marriage and was upset that the first marriage broke up and her ex-husband went away to a new place with-



out telling her. She wept and complained "I keep putting myself in these no-win situations. I can't believe I am allowing people to treat me this way. I do not see why I deserve all of this. I feel powerless and do not feel strong."

This is a the type of situations in which *Staphysagria* patients find themselves over which they feel they have no *control* and feel treated like a doormat. This patient was prescribed *Staph* 1M. On the next day she experienced deep melancholy; but on that night when her husband started abusing her after drinking, she was not upset nor did she show any reaction and felt confident. "I did not have much of a reaction. I did not cry or feel sorry for myself. I felt very strong, completely unattached, and have been that way since then. I know that I can carry on with my own life pretty much unaffected by what he does to me or to himself."

-KARL ROBINSON

Though in a majority of the cases only women need this remedy, Executives also find themselves in such situations. The following case of the same doctor illustrates this point

CASE 15:

A 38-year-old manager of a superstore found his job much too stressful and had to face situations where he could not give full expressions to his anger or feelings. His sleep was disturbed and he became a nervous wreck. He therefore quit the job as manager and became a checkout clerk. Though in the process he lost heavily monetarily and in other perks such as hospitalization insurance and despite that he developed a peptic ulcer because of past stressful career which began to bleed and he underwent gastrectomy. During the operations he needed a lot of blood transfusions and as a result he came down with hepatitis. Then the surgical wound refused to heal and became infected. It was at this stage he came for homoeopathic treatment.

he had no job, no insurance and a major operation with two complications. He was furious with his situation, his luck, the hospital, the blood bank and modern medicine being unable to deal with his hepatitis. In short he felt powerless and there was no one he could single out for revenge as it were.

The remedy was very clear and a dose of *Staph* 200 made him less angry overnight and more relaxed. His wound healed within a week and his energy returned.

-KARL ROBINSON.

Sipah has strong sexual urges: the provings show that such subjects constantly think of sex and have lascivious ideas; they masturbate to relieve them and Vithoulkas says that even an adult will masturbate daily before sleeping.

CASE 16:

A 26-year-old woman complained of bad health for the past 3 years. In any stressful situation she cried and her moods fluctuated considerably from anger to depression. Her spiritual teacher told her that all her sufferings were on account of anger which took the form of resentment against everything and non-acceptance of things as they are. Prior to meeting the Guru, she had a very active sex life with several lovers at a time. After meeting the guru she became celibate and admitted missing sex. At the time of consultation she was having trouble with her mother, who expected her to be a perfect daughter; as a result she was unable to express her real feelings in situations with her mother. After receiving a dose of *Staph* in 1M potency she relived a past incident of an attempted rape, which she could ward off successfully. "The attempted rape made me feel I had lost control of my body." After that incident she became promiscuous. She also had an abortion. As she re-experienced these incidents she realized how angry she had been at the doctor who had killed her baby and her boy friend for funding the abortion and being disappointed with herself for being taken



advantage of.

Staphysagria can be mild, sensitive and well behaved or maliciousness and egoistic like *Platina*. Look at the following rubrics:

Delusion lower, surrounding, he is much taller, censorious, critical; contradict disposition to; Humility of others, while he is great; Haughty; malicious, spiteful, vindictive. Play gambling passion for, making money, lotteries, stock market in; Greed, cupidity.

The following case of Dr Rajan Sankaran brings out this facet of this remedy very graphically.

CASE 17:

A 68-year-old man consulted for his acute bronchitis and consequent breathlessness. He had hypertension earlier which was now controlled with medicines. He was a heavy smoker and made several attempts to give up smoking including bets but could not. He was proud and wanted to achieve things in life on his own merit and work. Hence he rejected the car his father gave him when he just started working. He went to a club and played cards with stakes. His pride was easily hurt and once in a club where he was an office-bearer, a clerk passed some offensive remarks against his friend which he could not digest. He made that man pay for his remarks by sending constant memos to him pointing out his mistakes and ultimately terminated his services. He also learnt Vipassana meditation to control his BP and get strength of mind to give up smoking; only when he was in the Vipassana Institute, his BP was normal and he did not smoke there, but when he returned to Mumbai his BP rose and he continued to smoke. He said that he would not lie and if someone did not believe what he said, he was hurt.

Rajan Sankaran says that the main point of analysis in this case was one of gaining control. The patient wanted to control his BP with meditation and smoking and gambling at the club. But he was unsuccessful in controlling

these urges. His ego and honour were important to him. He was so proud that he did not want the car given by his father nor his money. He felt insulted or humiliated when somebody did not believe him. (Ailments from wounded honour) He was sensitive and offended easily as the episode in the club bears out. The other side was his maliciousness; he took revenge on one of the clerks of his club for his remarks.

"In Synthetic Repertory, the main remedy for people who want to give up smoking but cannot, is *Staphysagria*. This case has exactly the theme of *Staph*. While a part of him craves the cigarette, another part craves to find the control to stop but is unable to. You have to control your urge, your anger, your sexuality and your emotions. If you lose your control, you lose your dignity, honour and self-respect. *Staph* is the only other remedy along with *Platina* listed under the rubric: *Delusion, humility and lowness of others, while he is great.*" (Rajan Sankaran) This rubric exactly represents his action against an office bearer of the club. He took the following rubrics:

Tobacco, remedies to produce disgust for; self-control, fear of losing; Ailments from honour wounded; Egotism; malicious.

The patient was given *Staph* in LM1, 3, 4, 6, 8 serially with each potency daily for a month. After a week, his breathlessness decreased much and in 3 months the pneumonia patch was resolved. He was still smoking and unable to give it up completely. The potency was later raised upto 1M and 10M whenever he experienced some fears and finally he was able to give up his smoking altogether. -RAJAN SANKARAN: The System of Homoeopathy, Case 5.

Sources:

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4. Vithoulkas- Stolen Essences of materia medica

