

The Basis of Constitutional Prescribing

ABSTRACT: *Homoeopathy is a system of healing developed in 1790 by Dr Samuel Frederick Hahnemann, a German Physician. By self- experimenting with the quinine, he discovered that large doses of medicine actually causes Malaria like symptoms, while smaller doses cured the symptoms and then with further experimentation he developed an extensive system of medicine based on the concept of "Similia similibus curentur" or "let like be cured with like".*

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He named the system as Homoeopathy from the Greek words homois (the similar) and pathos (suffering). There are thousands of homoeopathic remedies, made from natural materials – plant, animal or mineral substances. These are used in minute quantity but with powerful dosage which are prepared in a specific way called as Potentisation according to homoeopathic principles.

Homoeopathy is based on a holistic approach to health. The homoeopath will look at the physical, mental and emotional states in an attempt to understand the whole person. Actually a precise definition of Homoeopathy says that there must be a proper in-depth case taking and understanding of the patient and these details must then be matched to a remedy in *Materia Medica*, specifically to one single remedy, ie, a simillimum, based on law of simillimum, which is one of the fundamental principles of homoeopathy. It is necessary to understand as much as possible about whole of a person's make up. From the homoeopathic point, every symptom, both emotional and physical, no matter how obscure, is a part of the person's expression of disease.

CONSTITUTIONAL PRESCRIBING is a holistic approach intended to treat the patient on emotional and spiritual levels of his or her being as well as at physical level. Constitutional homoeopathic pre-

scribing, also called as classical prescribing is a holistic system of medicine which refers to the selection and administration of homoeopathic preparations over a period of time. This treatment is related to what we call miasmatic disorders. So constitutional prescribing is based on the patient's symptom profile and specific aspects of homoeopathic theory.

Homoeopathic case taking for constitutional prescribing is similar to that of acute prescribing but more in depth. The initial interview takes about one and a half to two hours. Physician not only records patient's chief symptoms with modalities but also general characteristics and their life - style.

TO ILLUSTRATE THIS CONCEPT: In a patient with recurrent respiratory problem, one might possibly arrive at the acute remedies which may produce alleviation, but its use may not cure the underlying problem. There is a need of deep constitutional remedy, chosen to suit the patient from the range of powerful polychrests. It may be *Ars-alb*, *Calc-carb*, *Lyco*, *Nux-v*, *Puls*, *Kali-carb* etc. These remedies are described in great detail in the books of *Materia Medica* and their symptom picture needs to be compared to that of the patient, in order to find a match.

There is a phrase peculiar to Homoeopathy, "The Constitutional Drug". It is nothing but a remedy effective in treating individual; its selection is based



on the sum total of his strengths and weaknesses, mentally, emotionally and physically. We know that chronic disease is not self-limiting and shows no tendency to recover if untreated. And the therapeutic handling of cases of a chronic nature needs more than just an understanding of the symptomatology. To provide lasting relief in a chronic case, the efficacy of a constitutional remedy remains unmatched. Diseases are chronic when their origin lies in a deep rooted miasmatic influence. Hence constitutional prescribing necessitates adequate consideration to be given to this factor.

In constitutional prescribing only one remedy is used and preferably only in a single dose which must not be repeated without very careful consideration. Dr Hering enunciated the law of cure to evaluate the overall progress of constitutional prescribing. According to him, Healing progresses from the deepest parts of organisms to the external parts. Here we consider mental and emotional dimensions, brain, heart and other vital organs as deepest parts; and skin, hands, feet are considered as superficial / external parts. In other words it is stated: Healing proceeds from the centre to periphery. Symptoms appear or disappear in the reverse of their chronological order of appearance. Healing proceeds from the upper to the lower parts of the body.

ORIGIN OF CONSTITUTIONAL PRESCRIBING

The importance of the make-up of the physical constitution is introduced in aphorism 5 of the 5th and 6th edition of 'Organon of Healing Art'. But

regarding the origin of Constitutional prescribing, Homoeopaths believe that the idea did not originate with our founder. The closest he comes to it is in a couple of glancing references like he says that *Puls* is best suited to gentle, weepy girls and *Nux-v* is often needed by over - indulged business men. Hering's writings have given portrait of *Ars*, *Sulph* and other remedies, but it was Kent who first used the term 'Constitutional medicine' to describe the remedies that are used to treat chronic miasm or chronic diseases. Though he was the first person who derived logical connection between symptoms and perceived drug personality, he was of the opinion that the remedy cannot be memorized but can be understood as personalities / living images. But he condemned the practice of constitutional prescribing, saying it was un-homoeopathic because homoeopathy is concerned with deviation from the normal, where as constitution is normal. Later Margaret Tyler in the first half of 20th century brought the concept of constitutional prescribing for the first time and made the quest for constitution the prime task of the homoeopath. And subsequently, this term was used by Vithoulkas and his students in the 1970's.

CONCLUSION: The process of constitutional prescribing can be described as a journey along which one travels, as one unravels the layers of energy blockages that we have built in our lives, just like the Onion, made up of layer upon layer, constitutional prescribing aims to peel and treat each layer, going deeper and deeper with each prescription.



*I was in the express lane at the store quietly fuming.
Completely ignoring the sign, the woman ahead of me had slipped into the check-out line pushing a cart piled high with groceries.
Imagine my delight when the cashier beckoned the woman to come forward looked into the cart and asked sweetly, "So which six items would you like to buy?"
Wouldn't it be great if that happened more often?*