

Hering's Law-A False Perception

ABSTRACT: *Hering's Law pertains to the direction in which the symptoms of the patient will disappear during the process of cure under Homoeopathic treatment. But the law should not be accepted blindly unless proved neither rejected unless its falsity is proved. We shall start to observe and report carefully on the basis of Hahnemann's original observations. (This article was edited, so as to omit repetitions..Editor.)*



Abstracted from his own MD thesis by the same title

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In Homeopathy today, Hering's law is widely recognized as the second law of cure. Before we go into details, first we must define law: its importance in literature.

DEFINITION: According to Webster's dictionary, a law is defined as a sequence of events that occurs with unvarying uniformity.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LAW AND PRINCIPLES

Every medical modality is a mixture of art and science. However, before understanding the art of homoeopathy, the student must master the science- the infallible laws of nature upon which it is founded. The art of healing depends on the experience of the practitioner. Why did he see that case that way? What was his perception and reason for the selection of such remedy? The student trying to imitate only the art of the teacher will fail. It is like trying to learn chess by watching a grand master of chess without knowing the rules of moving the pieces. As Kent said, "Homeopathy cannot be learned from the clinic: "The art of healing must not be taught first. The science must be taught first, and the art next. The law first and the experience follows. The successful man is the one who has worked out the reason for his doing."

Too often we see a homoeopath presenting a case in many seminars and finally coming up with an obscure remedy, like a magician pulling a bird out of a hat, leaving participants suitably im-

pressed with his knowledge of Materia Medica but no wiser as to how he found the remedy. In different seminars, he may present the same case with a few modification. They present same case for many years. Many times they tell us different things in seminars but the reality is totally diverse in practice. From a good presenter, from each case presentation, we should be able to gather universal methods which we can apply to any case in our practice, based on the laws and principles.

HISTORY OF EVOLUTION OF HERING'S LAW

Some people think how important is it to know the history of homoeopathy: the goal is to cure the patient. Many homeopaths will say that and it is true, who cares about the history, what Hahnemann did and what Hering said and what happened. You have the symptoms of the patient, you have the Materia Medica, you take a remedy, you give it and that is it!

Today our system is suffering from a critical situation due to this attitude of Homoeopaths. If we want to make our system advanced and scientific, then every homoeopath should develop habit of proper search from history. If we want to make Homoeopathy as main stream from alternative system of medicine, every homoeopath should contribute and try to remove lacunae from the system.

Here I give-a brief idea about formulation of Hering's law through our source books.

CHRONIC DISEASE

Between 1828 and 1843, Hahnemann enunciated his theories of chronic diseases and 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 antipsoric remedies, in the correct posology. Possibly, old symptoms may return during an antipsoric 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.

ORGANON OF MEDICINE

In aphorism 161 and 248 of the fifth and sixth edition of the Organon of Medicine, Hahnemann says that in the treatment of old and very chronic disease, aggravation of the original disease does not appear if the remedy is accurately chosen and given in the appropriate small doses, which are only gradually increased. "When this is done, these exacerbations of the original symptoms of the chronic disease can appear only at the end of the treatment, when the cure is complete or nearly complete." The original symptoms of a chronic disease should be the last to aggravate or become more prominent before disappearing".

In aphorism 225, Hahnemann states that some psychic diseases are not the extension of physical disease but, instead, with only slight physical illness, they arise and proceed from the psyche, from persistent grief, resentment, anger, humiliation and repeated exposure to fear and fright. In time,

such psychic diseases often greatly harm the physical health." In other words, Hahnemann had recognized the existence of psychosomatic diseases, those diseases which progress from within outwards and from above downwards. This is the background that now leads us to Hering, who, among all of Hahnemann's students, was most similar to him. *Like Hahnemann, Hering was a true scientist who totally adopted the inductive method in his scientific pursuits.*

THE ORIGIN OF THE TERM "HERING'S LAW":

Where does the term "Hering's law" come from as it seems never to have been mentioned in the literature during Hering's time? In earliest time, Kent mentions in his philosophy and also an article published by Kent in the first volume of the Transactions of the Society of Homoeopaths called "Correspondence of Organs, and the Direction of Cure". He writes: "Hering first introduced the law of direction of symptoms: from within out, from above downward, in reverse order of their appearance. It does not occur in Hahnemann's writings. It is spoken of as Hering's law. There is scarcely anything of this law in the literature of homoeopathy, except the observation of symptoms going from above to the extremities, eruptions appearing on the skin and discharges from the mucous membranes or ulcers appearing upon the legs as internal symptoms disappear.

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

By using the name of Hering it is reasonable to say that Kent thus created false and misleading historical assumptions. No leader in United State after the death of H C Allen, blindly follow Kent's literature and tradition. 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 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. Each new generation of homoeopaths have 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.

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 Asthma 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 a 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. We 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. While treating a patient with an acute febrile disease that had progressed in the first stage from chills to fever, then to perspiration and lastly to weakness, I would observe a rapid and gentle recovery but without the patient re-experiencing the perspiration, then the fever and lastly the chills. While recovering from acute diseases under homoeopathic treatment, the patient does not re-experience the original symptoms one by one in the reverse order of their appearance. Many more

troublesome exceptions similar to the above could be cited.

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 *similimum* was not given!"

CONCLUSION

Let us now start carefully observing and reporting 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.

To end this article, I would like to leave you with the spirit of some significant thoughts of Constantine Hering 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, on the other hand, never to reject anything as false, unless there was stronger proof of its falsity."

We should be a staunch believer of Hahnemann and follow the path suggested by him. We also consider Hering's law not a Law but Rule of guidance for practical approach in our practice.

REFERENCES: Hahnemann *The Chronic Diseases*. Jain publishers. Hahnemann *Organon of medicine* translated by Boericke and Dudgeon: B Jain publishers. Hering C *The Guiding Symptoms of our Materia Medica*: B Jain publishers. Hering C *Analytical Therapeutics of the Mind*: B Jain publishers. Knerr C, *Life of Hering*: B Jain publishers. Kent JT *Lectures on Homeopathic Philosophy*: B Jain publishers. Roberts HA, *The Principles and Art of Cure of Homeopathy*, Luc de Schepper, *Hahnemanian Textbook of classical Homeopathy for the professional*: B Jain publishers.