

Homeopathic Medicine : The Past and The Future

We have come to a period in society when people are demanding more in the way of medical support than the treatment of the body as if it were a car; in other words, compartmentalized treatment of the part without attention to the whole. Certainly, we are more than the sum of our parts. What separates us from a car is our emotions and mental processes and our life force. Homeopathic medicine draws together all that we are. All our emotions, mental thoughts and physical symptoms tell a story that is uniquely our own. The homeopathic practitioner then, pays great attention to who we are as an individual in our own right. Then they treat accordingly. This means that two people with for example chronic headaches will probably receive different homeopathic medicines because one person has headaches from a fall as a child and the other from some emotional trauma after which these symptoms began. Great care is taken to listen to each person's own story. **It is said that the homeopath treats the person with the disease and not the disease as a separate entity.**

What Is Homeopathic Medicine?

Homeopathic medicine was first discovered in the late 1700's by a German physician/chemist, Samuel Hahnemann who was discouraged by the lack of cures in the medicine of his day. He discovered after much research, the basic tenant on which homeopathic medicine is based. That is, that our body and mind comprise a whole entity that in disease reflects in every way that the system is out of sorts. **He discovered that medicines which cure, have to treat the total symptom picture in**

their range of curative properties, including the mental and emotional symptoms, or they merely palliate. Hahnemann discovered that the best way to treat all conditions was in matching the symptom picture of the person's disease with the total symptom picture covered by the homeopathic medicine.

Utilizing the entire picture of the patient, including the more subtle mental and emotional information, as well as the physical symptoms, the homeopath picks a medicine which also takes into consideration, causes of the problems. For instance, if a patient has been quiet and apathetic since the loss of the family member, the medicine chosen will likely be one of the medicines used for treating grief, even if the patient came in to see the homeopath with a complaint of sore elbow which began just after the family loss. This is the essence of body-mind based treatment.

Scope of the Medicines

The properties of a all substances, whether plant, mineral or animal derived, when used as medicines often widen in scope when prepared homeopathically. Aurum metallicum, which is a homeopathic medicine made from pure Gold is used homeopathically at the physical level for the treatment of high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis and valvular heart problems, and is prescribed on the mental and emotional level for deeply and suicidally depressed patients. If the Aurum mental state is not present, then another medicine must be chosen for the heart and circulation symptoms, one that suits all levels of the mind/body connection.

What Are Symptoms?

Symptoms that reveal themselves in our body are not negative things. They are telling us that our body is signaling that something is out of whack. Food cravings are symptoms. Love of rainy weather is a symptom. These are all individual preferences and tell us about our body. Skin rashes of any kind in our society are considered something to be pushed back in. We use cortisone creams and other applications to make them go away. There is evidence that much of the asthma that we see in children today is reflecting the abuse of such creams in early infancy and childhood and that the body has simply found another more deep way of expressing and ridding some injury to the vital force. We have to ask ourselves whether the medicines that we take cure problems or merely suppress them temporarily. If a symptom returns right after discontinuing a medicine then what have we accomplished by taking it other than momentary silencing. Symptoms are the guiding force for the homeopath.

How Are the Medicines Given?

The medicines are given in minute but powerful doses prescribed in small white pills or in liquid form, and are usually taken on the tongue a few pills at a time or by drops as prescribed by the homeopath. The homeopathic remedies as they are called are usually only given for a short period of time, sometimes only with one dose given, and then the homeopath waits to assess the amount of improvement before deciding whether to redose at all. The medicines can lose their effect

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if taken in the presence of strong odors such as camphor or mint, immediately before or after coffee, or too soon before or after eating.

The First Visit to a Homeopath

We are all so different that even how we sleep, what we dream, how we react to certain weather and what food cravings we have are unique to us. The homeopath takes care to build a picture of who this individual is and what are the individual ailments. The first visit to a homeopath is about 1 ½ to 2 hours long. It is the time to gather as much information on the chief complaint and about the individual as is possible. In a chronic condition you may be asked to return in one week to pick up the medicine to allow the homeopath time to do careful research and reflection on the best medicine to suit your needs.

What is the Difference Between Herbals and Homeopathic Medicines?

Herbal medicines are made from plants exclusively while homeopathics are prepared from plants, minerals, mineral salts, and animal derivatives, such as the oyster shell in the medicine *Calcarea carbonica*.

In herbal preparations, the whole plant is chopped and dried and made into capsules or soaked in alcohol to make a tincture. Echinacea is an example of a common herbal medicine. There are often side effects associated with herbal medicines and **the public has to be careful to not just grab the latest herb off the shelf until it is regulated with written cautions and side effects or until advised by an alternative practitioner.** Some herbals may interfere with other medicines you may be taking. Ex. Licorice Root should not be taken if

a person has high blood pressure. The homeopath may use some herbals and immune system builders as adjuncts to homeopathic medicine. **The whole purpose for the development of homeopathic medicine was to develop medicines which can treat both the emotional and mental spheres as well as the physical ones, without side-effects.** In this way the medicines are individually suited in every way to the patient. For safety and to ensure the best possible care, it is wise to always consult a qualified practitioner before taking any of the herbal or homeopathic medicines.

Conclusion

Today, we are constantly reminded of all the negative aspects of our existence- the pollution, the stress, the rushed overworked lives we live and even the effects of the environment in which we live as if we are surrounded by germs and insects that are out to get us. How can we exist in the middle of this? Just know that a healthy immune system which develops after regular homeopathic care, can fight off the worst of these germs and pests. It may sound hard to believe, but consider the fact that healthy people don't get sick. Homeopathy restores health.

The Chinese say, **Be calmly active and be actively calm.** What does this mean? Being actively calm implies that we take steps to rejuvenate by rest and by doing what gives us pleasure. Don't forget to do what is fun, what makes you laugh and gives you a lift. Consider trying modalities such as Meditation, Yoga or Tai Chi or whatever is calming and gives relaxation, to regroup yourself and allow the body to heal itself by recharging your own batteries. Being calmly active implies that we moderate our lives, in our exercise, our eating, our work. How many

parents overload their children with extra activities and no one has a chance to breathe. I once asked a lady "What do you do for yourself?" and she burst into tears. This is an all too common story. Please take care of yourselves and seek professional and gentle advice for your ailments.

The future of Integrative Medicine lies in informed patients taking responsibility for their own health. This involves becoming an informed patient. Ask about side-effects, ask about long-term studies investigate all of the alternatives.