

A Homeopathic Primer

Larry A. Bernstein, VMD

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We can broadly defined Homeopathy as the treatment of disease with minute quantities of substances to trigger the body's intelligence to fight that disease on its own. Homeopathic physicians have discovered, over the centuries that the body can recognize microscopic amounts of different materials. These materials or "remedies" are matched to the symptoms and can have remarkable effects. True Homeopathy is a very pure science and is practiced on animals by veterinarians trained in the classical approach. It is one of the most powerful of the alternative therapies and has successfully treated everything from fears to cancer. It also affects the body's vital force and helps balance and adjust it. It is important to have a consultation with someone trained in this discipline to realize the full benefit of homeopathic treatment.

It is important to get a brief historical and philosophical perspective from which to begin. There is a historical basis for Homeopathy that dates back to the ancient Greeks and an excellent discussion of this can be found in Thorson's Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Homeopathy by Harald Gaier.

For our purposes we will jump to the late 1700's and the teachings of Dr. Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843). He is considered the modern founder of Homeopathy and was a physician who studied in Austria. He became more and more distressed and disillusioned over the barbaric medical practices of the time. Please remember that this was a time when it was common to use treatments such as bloodletting, oral heavy metals like mercury, poisons, like arsenic, and violent purgatives. The venereal diseases of Syphilis and Gonorrhoea were also rampant in Europe.

Hahnemann began to look for a gentler, more natural method of curing the patient and came to realize that symptoms are merely an expression of the underlying disease and not the disease itself. He wanted a way of stimulating the body to heal itself. We will go into this in more detail later. He wrote what is still the definitive work on Homeopathy, the Organon of Medicine in 1810. He then added five more editions, volumes of cases, lesser writings, practiced and taught until his death. His students expanded his work and carried on his teaching. That is why names like Hering, Boenninghausen and Kent are synonymous with Homeopathy.

The basic principle of Homeopathy is called the Law of Similars that "like cures like". It means that a substance that can cause symptoms of disease at normal doses can stimulate the body to FIGHT those same symptoms at minute, homeopathic doses. The other important thing to remember is that all the symptoms a patient exhibits are only a reflection of an imbalance in that patient's inner force. It is all one picture! Classical Homeopathy calls this inner force the VITAL FORCE and we will use that term. Understanding these concepts is a major step in understanding Homeopathy and holistic healing in general.

Anything in nature that is out of balance will manifest some sort of reaction. Usually this is a vibration. Picture a tire on a car that shakes when not balanced or perhaps a washing machine with an unbalanced load. Those machines will shake. The level and pattern of the shaking depends on each individual machine and the individual load. It makes less sense to bolt the washing machine to the floor to stop it from shaking and more sense to open the lid and try to balance the load. In this situation we know the shaking is a result of the uneven load and that is what we need to fix. We also know that, if we do not fix it and only bolt down the machine, there will be greater damage inside the machine. Since it cannot shake (bolted down now), it will, likely, tear up the motor or bearings inside. So, the shaking is a way of not doing deeper damage.

If the body's internal – Vital Force is out of balance, the “shaking” is actually the pattern of symptoms we see with our patient. This vital force is responsible for maintaining the body's state of health and balance. It is constantly assaulted. Some examples of things that can wreak havoc on the body are; poor nutrition, toxins, vaccines, allopathic medications, pollution, radiation and of course, emotional upheaval or constant stress. The vital force tries to protect the body and the signs of this battleground are the SYMPTOMS. These symptoms can be expressed at many different levels.

When one studies Homeopathy from the stand point of chronic disease, there is a consistent pattern that can be used to gauge the status and progression of the chronic disease based on the level and location of the pathology in the organism.

Level 1 - Skin – this is usually the stage before Psora becomes chronic and deep. Over time, with suppression or continued insults – stress, repeated vaccinations, diet etc., Illness moves inward and establishes itself into a chronic (even if latent) state.

Level 2 – Functional Disturbances – on this level things are not working right – not broken in the chronic pathological sense but on their way. Constipation, diarrhea, irregular menses, headaches, dyspepsia –are all examples of imbalances at this level.

Level 3 – Emotional – this is usually divided into emotional and mental (Level 4 is Mental) and I have found the line between these two levels has an extensive overlap or gray area. Sometimes, it is difficult to clearly classify some presentations. I will often need to use mild versus severe life disruption as an arbitrary (and subjective) dividing line. Anxieties, phobias, storm fears, aggressive behavior and separation anxiety can all fall into this level but one can also see that severe disturbances might well be considered Level 4 – Mental.

Level 4 – Mental Disturbances - here we see the true mental pathologies; psychoses, neuroses, sociopathic disorders, severe phobias, severe OCD are all examples of Level 4 disease. When an animal's symptoms show on this level, one might see rage, aggression, severe destructive separation issues. This might well be the storm fear dog that will jump through a plate glass window in terror during a storm. You can easily see this level in the clear cut cases but, as previously stated, there is a large gray zone and often it is the rest of the case that tells you where a symptom fits.

Level 5 – Chronic Tissue Pathology – here we are getting to the physical tissue presentations of

the imbalance. This is not the acute inflammations of Level 1 but the deeper chronic tissue pathology. Liver, kidney, heart, adrenal, joint and intestinal organic pathology are all common examples of this stage.

Level 6 – Cancer - there is a stage mentioned in older teachings called Tubercular that can precede this stage and may involve lumps and destructive lesions that outweigh organ degeneration but are not defined as cancer in the true pathological sense – it also confuses my clients so I tend to gloss over it and define level 6 as cancer.

Remember that this is a “Model” and is not always straight-line. I often see cases where multiple levels exist simultaneously or levels have been skipped (or not noticed).

It may be only a skin rash or it might go deeper and present as asthma, arthritis or chronic intestinal problems. As the disease moves to a deeper level and the vital force must concede more territory in its battle for optimal health, these symptoms move into the mental and emotional plane and can exhibit as emotional imbalances like inappropriate fears, aggression, compulsion or even dementia. As time goes on and the process goes unchecked, the vital force is weakened by both the chronic disease and the suppression of more superficial symptoms. As it weakens, it must express itself on a more core level and may even progress to cancer.

It is crucial to remember that every one of the symptoms is an expression of the imbalance of the vital force as it tries to compensate for the underlying chronic disease state. Dr. Herring taught us that the body heals from the inside out and the top down. This means that a tumor or abscess on an internal organ is a more severe situation than a rash on the skin since one is exterior and one is interior. If the vital force does not have the energy to express itself on the exterior it resorts to an interior symptom (and this is usually more serious) to handle the imbalance. The usual progression of chronic disease is from outside to inside. This is an important concept to understand the effects of suppressing a symptom. The vital force does this to protect us – like a safety valve and tries to put the problem where it will do the least damage. That is why the skin is considered so superficial. Most skin problems are uncomfortable but one does not usually die from them. As we tell the vital force that these skin symptoms are not allowed by suppressing them with steroids and antibiotics (like bolting down the washing machine), the vital force still must try to compensate for the imbalance and finds a new, more interior way of doing this. Perhaps the patient now starts with incontinence or prostate problems or asthma or arthritis. If we again suppress this new reaction, the vital force may move even deeper to find relief. The patient may start with strange behavior if on the mental level or even begin kidney, liver or heart issues as compensation.

The depth, number and strength of the symptoms directly relates to the strength of the vital force. A strong vital force may show very strong symptoms on a surface level. The vibrant puppy that receives a vaccination and immediately breaks with a skin rash and fever is an example of a strong vital force. On the other hand, we see so many cases of animals presenting with advanced cancer and the guardian often states "He has always been perfectly healthy (no symptoms) and now he has cancer". The fact that he has had no observable symptoms would usually indicate a weak vital force that could not produce visible symptoms and everything happened under the

surface. Think of the person who never appears to get angry or upset and then goes on a deadly rampage. It was all happening below the surface.

Once you accept the premise that there is an all-pervasive, underlying vital force then the next important term we need to understand is SUPPRESSION. We touched on this earlier.

In allopathic medicine a symptom is usually thought of as the patient's real disease and the goal is to hold back, decrease or eliminate this symptom. This is often done without addressing the underlying cause. If your tooth hurts and we inject a local anesthetic, the pain goes away but that does not mean the problem is gone! If we use medications to suppress these symptoms then the vital force tries to create new symptoms to compensate for the imbalance that is still there. If the vital force is strong then the original symptom may return. Otherwise, it may be unable to express on the same level and creates a symptom that is more interior and could be much worse per Herring's Law of Cure.

This is such a critical topic that we will look at another example. Allopathic (conventional) medicine is symptom driven. Modern medicine feels, in most cases, that the elimination of the symptom is the same as elimination of the disease. If you get a skin rash, are given cortisone and the rash disappears, they have cured your "skin" disease. Later when you start having a kidney "infection", they treat you with antibiotics and cure your kidney disease. A year later you start getting chronic depression or fatigue so they treat that with anti-depressants and cure it. Finally when you develop a serious heart ailment, they treat that as "heart disease".

Many things are suppressive. Medications are a major source of suppression but herbs, acupuncture and incorrect homeopathic remedies can also be suppressive.

We next need to discuss what constitutes a homeopathic remedy. Homeopathic remedies are ultra-dilute preparations of common (or even toxic) substances. They are so dilute that they have very little or none of the original item in them. The important thing is that they retain the imprint or frequency of the original substance in a more energetic form and work on a deep, energy related level.

Each step of the dilution process is accompanied by succussion. This means that each dilution is stimulated (potentiated, succussed, shaken) so it gains energetic strength at each dilution. This is why a more dilute level or a HIGHER POTENCY has much less substance but much stronger action. It is the energy. If you can accept this principle, it is easy to see how they can act with such power.

Homeopaths have found that these ultra-dilute remedies, if activated or POTENTIATED between successive dilutions, can actually stimulate the body to initiate its own healing process. It is like giving a Bloodhound the scent and sending it on its mission.

The actual mechanism for this stimulation is still undiscovered but is thought to work on an energy level. Recent advances in Quantum Physics are opening windows into the process but let us leave it at that for now. This is why we use the term energy medicine. This gets into the idea

that there is a level of energy or reaction that scientists can't yet quantify and is too involved for this paper.

We need to stipulate the effect, as we are not here to prove that Homeopathy works, only to explain its practice. Let us take the idea that it does affect the body in a predictable fashion as a given and not get into the controversy over whether it can or cannot work from a conventional Newtonian physics perspective. There are much deeper writings that explore these aspects and to argue this defeats the purpose of this chapter. One good general reference is Dana Ulman's Discovering Homeopathy. Suffice it to say that many of us who have seen it work have been impressed with the dramatic effects it can and does have and we will accept this effect on face value for the purposes of explanation. Interestingly, some of my very best clients have been NASA scientists. They have no problem accepting the idea that there is an energy we have not yet quantified in this universe. Remember, physicists are discovering new sub-atomic particles all the time. Philosophically speaking, did these not exist before they were discovered or were they just not yet measurable?

Dr. Hahnemann found that a substance or remedy in minute doses can stimulate the body to heal itself of the same symptoms it CAUSES at normal doses. As previously stated, "Like cures like" is the basic tenet of Homeopathy.

An example would be the following:

If you were to give pure arsenic to an animal or person, as the toxicity progressed, you would see depression, anxiety, thirst, vomiting, jaundice and diarrhea. Now suppose that a homeopath sees a case that has many of these symptoms but you know it cannot be arsenic poisoning since that is so rare and the cat lives in a penthouse and could never be exposed to arsenic. However, this case of a cat with another "illness" has many of these same symptoms. The homeopath may dispense Arsenicum-album, the homeopathic dilution of arsenic. This potentiated remedy stimulates the vital force to react to the symptoms. This is like giving the vital force a guide to the disease state so it knows how to react and trigger the healing.

This next paragraph contains a deeper explanation of what appears to happen when you give the correct homeopathic remedy. It is not critical you understand this, but if you can, it will bring a much deeper understanding of Homeopathy.

The disease occupies a place in the body on an energetic level. Think of it as a stain on the vital force. When you introduce a homeopathic remedy that matches the pattern of the stain (the disease picture) at potency sufficient to overcome the natural disease, it displaces the real disease and sets up an imitation for a few days. During this time, since it was stronger than the original disease, the remedy stimulates a reaction from the body. If the remedy and the actual real disease are similar on a symptom level, the body is actually fighting the real disease also. The remedy disappears in a few days but the stimulation (remedy reaction) may last for weeks or even months. The close matching of the remedy pattern to the disease pattern of the patient is a big part of a homeopathic workup since the closer the match, the more likely to get a positive reaction in that patient.

Many of these remedies were "proved" in the 1800's by giving small doses of the diluted remedy to groups of healthy people and noting the symptoms created by repeated high doses. These were then listed in books called *Materia Medicas*. To be a good homeopath, you had to learn many of these remedies (some *Materia Medicas* have hundreds of pages of symptoms for each remedy) so you could recognize the "remedy picture".

Around the turn of the twentieth century, Dr. Boenninghausen and then Dr. Kent decided to analyze these *Materia Medicas* and try to list the remedies by the symptom they brought out during their provings. The lists are called *Repertories*. This was a monumental task considering there were no computers. Dr. Kent ended up with a thousand page book (if you get the one with the tiny type) of "rubrics".

Homeopathic rubrics are symptoms followed by a list of all the remedies found to produce that symptom during a proving or clinical experience and the degree to which the symptom appeared. Almost every *Materia Medica* follows Kent and contains multiple sections divided by body section or problem. That is why there are sections like "Mind" or "Rectum" or "Chest" or "Head pain" and each section has thousands of rubrics (or symptoms) listed with remedies that have shown an affinity for that symptom.

To demonstrate an example of a rubric, we will take the case of the very thirsty dog that drinks a great deal of water at one time but does not go to the water bowl frequently.

We could look in Kent's *Repertory* under the section *Stomach* and find the sub-heading "thirst". We then look at the next sub-level and find "large quantities" and finally under this we would find "at long intervals. This rubric would be described as *Stomach; Thirst; large quantities; at long intervals*. This is an actual rubric with five potential remedies listed in the original Kent *Materia Medica*.

As you moved back up the chain, to the level or heading above (*Stomach; Thirst; large quantities*), there would be a greater range of remedies for consideration. If you move up even another level to *Stomach; Thirst; large quantities* you would find a list of 42 remedies. This might provide a much better chance of it including the appropriate remedy in your analysis. If you go up another level to *Stomach: Thirst*. Here there are 253 remedies and using this more general rubric might make it very difficult to pick the most appropriate remedy since most major remedies will show up under this rubric. You would have to depend on other more specific symptoms to narrow your remedy search.

To analyze a case, a trained homeopath takes a detailed history and then attempts to find rubrics for characteristic symptoms that are appropriate to the case on both a physical and mental level and list all the applicable remedies. We then look for a common thread or theme to the case. We always try to use our knowledge of the remedies and our experience to this purpose. Because of the incredible number of remedies and the large amount of information on many of them, we often we have to refer back to the original writings (provings) in the source *Materia Medicas*. This may help us understand the true essence of the remedies and make our choice based on the ENTIRE picture.

To date, there are over 4000 remedies. These include herbs, plants, poisons, inert (when not potentiated!) substances like Silicea (sand) and homeopathic extracts of actual living material like bacteria, Parvovirus, Distemper etc. called "nosodes".

We choose the remedy and potency (always remember, the more dilute - the more activated during each stage of dilution thus more powerful) based on the case, the symptoms, the age and our evaluation of the Vital Force of the patient. To get an idea of the differences in the strengths of the vital force, think about a vibrant puppy versus the old dog with cancer. Also imagine the vitality of a six-month old kitten versus an 18 year old frail cat and you can see the two extremes.

Please realize that this is just the tip of the iceberg. There are many other deeper considerations in Homeopathy like second remedies, aggravations, intercurrent remedies and chronic versus acute disease.

It is a complete discipline of medicine and contrary to the writings by some; it is not "harmless". In nature, anything with this much power to heal can have side effects and is best supervised by a trained homeopath. This is especially true in chronic, weak and long standing cases. It is also true in cases with a great deal of pathological changes such as tissue destruction or deep lesions.

In Conclusion

It is my hope that this will serve as an understandable introduction to the science, the art, the challenge and the wonder of Homeopathy and that your experiences may be as wonderful as mine have been. It is much more than a treatment. It is a sensible way of thinking and has the power to enhance health and life on many levels besides the physical.

Larry A. Bernstein, VMD, CVA, CVH, PHom.

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