

The Power of Homeopathy

Introduction

When I developed chronic fatigue syndrome in 1988, I didn't know where to turn. Was the problem a mysterious bacteria called "chlamydia"? After the first day of antibiotics I felt a surge of energy; but the effect quickly wore off, despite repeated doses of erythromycin. I tried other therapies, including acupuncture, with some improvement. After one memorable acupuncture treatment, I felt a tremendous boost in energy, but it only lasted for a few hours. Further treatments could not get me off my plateau. In desperation, finally, I booked an appointment with my wife's homeopath.

This decision was quite a concession for me, because I had been making fun of my wife's homeopathic treatment. The fact that I knew nothing about homeopathy made it all the more easy to put it down. Unfortunately, I could not find the answer to my own health problems. Meanwhile, I saw substantial improvement in my wife's condition.

I did not get immediate results from homeopathy. But intuitively, I felt I was on the right track. In retrospect, I can see that it took my homeopath some time to get to know me and zero in on the best medicine for me. After our third follow-up, I noticed a real change. Over a period of a few weeks I got my energy back, and I've remained well for the ensuing nineteen years.

How does the homeopathic medicine work? In brief, it stimulates the body's own self healing mechanism. This mechanism is something the scientific community knows very little about. In conventional medicine, the self healing mechanism is simply ignored. For this reason, if you take medication or have surgery, you may find yourself in the position of needing more drugs and surgery.

One of my first patients was a 79 year old woman with chronic bronchitis. Every month she caught a cold that developed into a bronchial infection, which was treated with antibiotics. This cycle had been repeating itself for several years.

It took me a year to restore her immune system with various homeopathic medicines. She has remained free of infection, now, for the past 14 years.

This paper will explain what we know about the self healing mechanism, and how homeopathy works with it. The following topics will be covered:

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| I. | Some case histories |
| II. | What's in a homeopathic medicine? |
| III. | How do homeopathic medicines work? |
| IV. | Homeopathy for emotional healing |
| V. | "What does my MD think of homeopathy?" |
| VI. | What is the history of homeopathy? |
| VII. | Homeopathic self-prescribing |

Some case histories

A pinched finger

My nephew Tom, 4, ran up to me as I entered the house. I shut the door behind me. I don't know how he managed to get his little pinky caught in the space between the door and the jamb.

He screamed. I dashed out to my car and retrieved a homeopathic first aid kit.

Tom was crying when I returned. His little finger looked red, but not broken. I picked out the vial labeled *Hypericum perforatum* (St. John's wort) and poured some pellets into the cap. "I'm going to give you some candy," I said, and popped the pellets into his mouth.



Hypericum perforatum

In thirty seconds he stopped crying. I rubbed his back and said, "You're a brave boy." In a few minutes he was playing again. The injured finger was completely forgotten.

Most people have experienced the pain of getting a finger or toe squeezed. The usual treatment is to immerse the finger in cold water or ice. Even so, the pain lasts a long time.

Hypericum has a long history of use for injury to nerves. Civil War soldiers collected the plant to treat battle wounds. A British sergeant during World War I wrote: "To see a man badly wounded by shrapnel through his shoulder joint and in terrible pain, to be transformed to laugh and joke with the men by two little pellets, is something wonderful."¹

Hypericum is not a pain killer, however; it actually stimulates self-healing. A curious fact is that, when *Hypericum* is tested on healthy volunteers, some of them actually *feel nerve pains*. We shall make sense of this fact later.

Breast abscess

In March of 2003 a nursing mother, 41, called me from Michigan. "I feel ill," she says, "very run down. I have a fever of 101.5°. My nipples are sore on both sides."

What's this? Mastitis. The normal treatment is antibiotics. Why would we want to avoid antibiotics in this case?

SIDE EFFECTS OF ANTIBIOTICS

- fever and nausea
- allergic reactions including photodermatitis
- diarrhea from destruction of normal intestinal flora
- yeast infections from disruption of normal vaginal microflora
- interaction with other drugs
- in nursing mothers, the drug goes into the breast milk

I recommended the homeopathic medicine, *Phytolacca decandra* (pokeberry), in a 30c potency.

¹ Shepherd, Dr. Dorothy. *Homeopathy for the First Aider*, C.W. Daniel Co. Ltd., 1992, p. 17

I didn't hear from her for four days. Then she called to say, "The fever is gone, my breasts are no longer sore, just tender. I still feel tired. I have a sore throat." I told her to stop the medicine. The next day the sore throat disappeared. I didn't hear from her for five days. Then she called to say: "I'm feeling much, much better. Thank you."

A second case

In August of 2006 I got a call from another nursing mother in Virginia. "I woke up feeling achy," she said. "I feel cold. My temperature is 101.3°. I feel blah. I had a breast abscess three weeks ago, and I took antibiotics for one week. There is a red hot spot on my breast."

Again I recommended *Phytolacca* 30c. She called back three days later. "I took two doses of the medicine, and by the next morning the fever was gone. I'm now 90% improved. My breast is still a little sore." She went on to make a full recovery.



Phytolacca (pokeweed)

A third case

A 51 year old woman from Minnesota called me in January, 2008. "My right nipple is inflamed," she said. "The doctor says it's either a staph or strep infection. I've never heard of anything other than antibiotics clearing that up.

"I'm scared. There's raised red lines visible on my breast."

I said, "How about if you take a homeopathic medicine and, if you're not better within 24 hours, you can start antibiotics?" She agreed.

She called the next day. "I feel a little better, the red lines did not get longer, and they're not quite as red. My MD is having trouble finding an antibiotic that I'm not allergic to.

"My husband is telling me not to fool around. I told my MD about doing the homeopathy, and she was open to it, but said she didn't think it would work."

She called two days later. "My breast is much better. The red lines are hardly visible. I still have some soreness. There's a scab where the nipple ulcerated." She went on to make a full recovery.

These three cases illustrate the power of the immune system to overcome infection, given the appropriate stimulus. In my practice many types of infection have been cured, including otitis media (middle ear infection), sinusitis, cystitis, and pneumonia.

Phytolacca has a special affinity for breast infections. Why? No one knows for certain, but an interesting fact is that, when *Phytolacca* is tested on healthy volunteers, some of them feel antipathy to nourishment; they refuse to eat. The significance of this fact will emerge in the next three sections.

What's in a homeopathic medicine?

Homeopathic medicines are prepared from plant, mineral or animal substances according to a special process, known as *potentization*:

- 1) The original material is ground up and dissolved in alcohol. This solution is termed the "mother tincture."
- 2) One drop of mother tincture is added to 99 drops of pure water in a new bottle. The bottle is shaken 10-20 times. This bottle is the "first dilution."
- 3) One drop of the first dilution is added to 99 drops of water in a new bottle. The bottle is shaken 10-20 times. This is the "second dilution."
- 4) The process continues in the same way until the desired potency is reached. *The homeopathic potency equals the number of dilutions.* A 30c potency of a homeopathic medicine, for example, is the thirtieth dilution of the mother tincture.

Most homeopathic medicines are sold as pills rather than liquid. The pills are lactose moistened with the homeopathic solution.

We saw from the case examples that potentized medicines work just as well as crude herbs—if not better! But how? According to the laws of chemistry, the last molecule of original substance would disappear with the twelfth dilution. So what's left in the bottle?

In the 1990s, a physicist discovered that ice crystals form spontaneously around the few remaining molecules of the original substance at high dilutions². These crystals are called **Ie crystals** ("I" for *ice*, "e" for *electromagnetic*), because they're created by electromagnetic forces. The crystals are stable at room temperature, and they replicate themselves when the solution is shaken.



Photo of water crystal, taken by Dr M. Emoto

In sum, Ie crystals are the active ingredient of homeopathic medicines. The original substance serves only as a template for the production of these crystals.

Since Ie crystals are water, homeopathic medicines are guaranteed 100% nontoxic. Even poisonous substances can be used therapeutically, then, as homeopathic medicines.

An additional benefit of potentization is that only a small amount of original substance is required to produce a large amount of medicine. Since many medicinal plants and animals are endangered, homeopathy is the only way to utilize them without further depletion.

How do Ie crystals trigger healing?

Consider the following analogy. A photographic image can affect us powerfully, even though it's only a representation. In the old days, movie theatres would sometimes insert a single frame in the movie, before intermission, showing a cold glass of Coca Cola. This practice is now outlawed because it is so effective in getting people to buy drinks! The frame would flash by too quickly to be noticed, but the brain records everything.

² Shui-Yin Lo, "Anomalous State of Ice," *Modern Physics Letters B*, 10,19 (1996):909-919

The reason this subliminal message is so powerful is that, during the movie, people become so engrossed that they ignore the subtle signals sent to the brain by the body, such as thirst signals. Once we block out something, the block remains in effect for a while. The image of the cold Coca Cola, then, served to *remind people of their thirst*.

In the same way, homeopathic medicines stimulate the autonomic nervous system, which maintains homeostasis in the body, to promote self-healing.

Self-healing by nature

How often do you replace your clothes? Every year? Two years? Five years?

I have to admit, I have a sweater that's twenty years old. It's in terrible condition, but I hold onto it anyway.

How often do you replace your skin? After five decades my skin is still in good condition. Why is there such a big difference between clothes and skin?

Try this experiment. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. After ten seconds exhale. Now open your eyes.

In the time you used to take that one breath, millions of new cells were created in your body, while millions of old and defective cells were destroyed. Did you notice?

By nature we are self-creating and self-healing. Because we are unaware of this phenomenon, however, we seek to "fix" ourselves with drugs or surgery when something goes wrong with our health. In reality, the self-healing mechanism requires only one thing: freedom from interference.

What interferes with self-healing? In my understanding, it is the primitive "fight or flight" response common to all animals.³ A perceived threat stimulates the sympathetic nervous system, a component of the autonomic nervous system (ANS). The sympathetic nervous system increases heart rate, respiration rate, blood pressure and other internal parameters, putting the body in a state of "red alert." As long as the sympathetic nervous system is active, the healing process cannot proceed; the body's resources have been commandeered for fighting or fleeing.

Let's take another look at what happened to my nephew, Tom. When he pinched his finger, he immediately began screaming. At this point, he was in a state of "flight or fight," frightened and upset by the pain from the injury. Unfortunately, Tom was caught in a vicious cycle, because as long as he remained upset the damage to the nerves in his finger could not be repaired, and as long as he felt pain he remained upset. The function of the homeopathic medicine, then, was to break this vicious cycle: it *simulated* a threat *similar enough to the original injury* that his nervous system shifted its focus to the new threat. But this new threat vanished in a split second, as soon as the Ie crystals melted in Tom's mouth. At this point, the sympathetic nervous system shut down, and healing could proceed.

In the same way, the mastitis patients were also in a state of fear and anger, though we do not know the original cause. Frequently, the act of nursing brings up unresolved issues for the mother of not being adequately nurtured. The function of

³ This idea is based on the work of Peter Levine, author of *Waking the Tiger* [North Atlantic Books, 1997]

the *Phytolacca*, then, was to simulate a similar threat of not getting enough nourishment.

If Tom had been left to scream undisturbed, he would have eventually settled down, and his injury would have healed. The homeopathic medicine, then, merely speeded up the natural process. What about chronic diseases, however, when time brings no healing?

Homeopathy for emotional healing

Jin-mei, 29, a thin, delicate woman, consulted me for several problems—anal fissures, toothache, pain in the ovary, and most of all, anxiety.

She related that when she was just born, she was considered so ugly that no one in the delivery room wanted to hold her—not even her mother—and she was passed from one relative to the next. As a baby Jin-mei was unable to digest breast milk. While growing up, she suffered frequent joint dislocations.

I treated Jin-mei with many different homeopathic medicines. After each one there was symptomatic improvement, but then a new problem came along. Finally, I hit upon the idea of giving her *Calcarea fluorica* (prepared from calcium fluoride). That night Jin-mei had a dream:

I am at a music camp in the Midwest. My [older] brother is with me. Suddenly there is a tornado warning; it is going to be the biggest of the century. I see lightning. Everyone is trying to find a place to hide. Three small tornados come at me. One hits me. I fall down, but I'm not in pain. Then the tornado disappears. The second and third tornados try to hit me, but they miss.

Then the major tornado is coming. My brother is so weak he can't stand, so he holds onto me. We go below ground. There are many people. We keep going down, as in a copper mine. I'm not panicked. We are near the center of the earth and can't go any deeper. I just have to wait and see.

At this point she awoke. Then she fell asleep again and had another dream:

I am back at my elementary school in China. There is a tsunami wave coming. I am looking out the window at the wave. It is twenty-five stories high. I say, "It's so beautiful!" I'm trying to take a picture with my cell-phone. The wave just goes away. There is a wall that stops it. I hear my mom calling me; she wants me to call my brother to see if he is ok.

Jin-mei deals with the threat of a tornado by symbolically going to a place of security deep within herself. After these dreams, Jin-mei was noticeably calmer and able to handle stress. Her fissures, ovarian pain and tooth pain also cleared up—she was even able to cancel a scheduled root canal operation.

Calcium occurs naturally in the cells of the skin, bones, teeth, tendons and ligaments. It also plays an important role in the nervous system. In Jin-mei's case, the problem was not of an insufficient *quantity* of calcium in her diet, but an inability to assimilate it.

How did this problem occur, and what was the role of the homeopathic medicine in

overcoming it? Calcium is strongly associated with mothering, since it is supplied through breast milk. The whole issue of mothering, however, of being nurtured, was problematic for Jin-mei. In a sense, she was split off from the mothering energy in herself because she was frightened of being rejected and abandoned.

Fight or flight cannot be sustained for a long time; they demand too much energy. Over time, we adapt to an unresolved anger or fear by *walling the threat off from awareness*. For example, people who suffer child abuse typically cannot remember their experiences. In the same way, we imprison individuals who are perceived as dangerous criminals; we wall off whole countries that are considered hostile. The problem with this "walling off" phenomenon is that it interferes with the self-healing mechanism. Consider the following analogy. I clean my home and maintain it in good condition. But let's say there's a room in my home where something traumatic occurred. I cannot bear to think of this trauma, so I have locked the room up. Now it exists outside the scope of my consciousness. Gradually it will become dirty and fall into disrepair, a weak link in my home, a potential entry point for the elements, vermin and pests. My ability to function is impaired to a greater or lesser extent by the loss of this room. If the room is the basement, for example, my sense of security will be compromised, because I have nowhere to go in case of a severe storm.

In the same way, the self is the owner and inhabitant of the body. In fact, the body *is* the self, or rather the physical aspect perceived by the senses. So a split in the self has physical consequences. If Jin-mei has walled off her maternal instinct, for example, her ability to assimilate calcium is impaired.

Such problems cannot be addressed through psychotherapy, because they originate from a pre-verbal stage of development. The homeopathic medicine acts because it somehow represents what is feared symbolically, in the archaic universal language of the psyche.

Some months later, Jin-mei confided: "If I had had kids at 25, I would have abused them. Now I know I could be more nurturing."

"What does my MD think of homeopathy?"

Many MDs today are open to complementary and alternative medicine. With regard to homeopathy, however, MDs are in a difficult position because of lack of knowledge. Few medical schools include homeopathy in their curriculum. For this reason, many MDs have the mistaken idea that homeopathy works by placebo effect. There are two solid pieces of evidence that disprove this notion:

1. In any given situation, only certain homeopathic medicines have an effect;
2. Homeopathic medicines are used successfully to treat animals and small children.

A second medical myth is that homeopathy is "unproven." In reality, there have been dozens of scientific studies showing significant results from homeopathic treatment.⁴ There have also been studies that fail to show significant results, however, and so the jury is still out.

It is important to understand what is meant by the word, "unproven," which has a special significance scientifically. If the reader should come to me with pneumonia,

⁴ Lansky, A. *Impossible Cure*, Portola Valley, California, R.L. Ranch, 2004, p. 164

for example, and you improve dramatically 24 hours after homeopathic treatment, that would not be considered "proof" that homeopathy works. From a scientific standpoint, it would only be your personal experience that homeopathy works. Proof can only be obtained from a double-blind, placebo controlled clinical trial.

The problem is that if a group of volunteers is treated homeopathically for pneumonia, each individual may require a different medicine, depending on their signs and symptoms. Most scientific trials of homeopathy, however, are conducted by researchers with no homeopathic training. Thus, it is very easy to show that homeopathy does not work.

Some "quack busters" assume *a priori* that homeopathy does not work because it "defies" the laws of physics. It is wise to consider that our present understanding of physics may be incomplete, however, and that theory should account for facts, not deny them.

What is the history of homeopathy?

The German physician, Samuel Hahnemann, developed the principles of homeopathy in the early 19th century. The first homeopathic doctors came to America in the 1830s. The popularity of homeopathy zoomed when it proved effective in several epidemics of cholera. During the latter half of the 19th century, homeopathy was in fact the dominant medical system in America. Abraham Lincoln and Mark Twain, for example, were strong supporters of homeopathy.

With advances in pharmacology, however, patent medicines became big business. The pharmaceutical industry provided support for the American Medical Association, a trade group formed in 1846 in New York City to promote "orthodox" medicine and compete with the homeopaths. The AMA astutely gained political influence and won a government granted monopoly in all states on the practice of medicine.⁵ Medical schools teaching homeopathy were forced to close or revise their curricula. The homeopathic practitioners were invited to join the AMA on the condition that they not call their treatments "homeopathic." This tactic was perhaps the most brilliant of all, for almost overnight homeopathy seemed to fade from view. From 1930 to 1980, homeopathy survived only in a few far-flung places such as India.

This period of dormancy ended in the 1970s, when a young Greek engineer named George Vithoulkas revived interest in homeopathy and trained a new generation of practitioners. Today, homeopathy is the second most used medical system in the world, with over \$1 billion in expenditures for treatment annually (as of the year 2000).⁶ Most of this money is paid out of pocket by individuals who choose homeopathic over free conventional treatment.

Homeopathy is now the second most used medical system in the world for animals, as well. Homeopathic remedies are widely used in lieu of antibiotics, for example, by organic dairy farmers⁷ and livestock producers.

⁵ Grossinger, R. *Planet Medicine*, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, 1990, fifth edition, p. 230-240

⁶ Adelman D et al. *Current Medical Diagnosis & Treatment 2001*. Tierney L, McPhee S, Papadakis M (editors). Lange Medical Books, 2001, p.1655

⁷ "Homeopathic Supported Udder Health Control Regarding Cow Associated Factors in Brandenburg (D)," by P. Klocke et al. In IFOAM 2000: The World Grows Organic: Proceedings 13th International IFOAM Scientific Conference, Basel, Switzerland, 28

The nonprofit Council for Homeopathic Certification was founded in 1991 to recognize homeopathic practitioners in North America. The right to use the letters "CCH" ("Certified in Classical Homeopathy") is granted to practitioners who have met professional standards of training and competence. Since homeopathy is its own discipline, no other medical credential has equivalent value.

Do-it-yourself homeopathy

Since homeopathic medicines can do no harm, is it safe to self-prescribe them? The answer is a qualified 'yes.' There are different levels of homeopathy. On the simplest level, one can use homeopathic medicines symptomatically. *Hypericum* for a pinched finger, *Phytolacca* for mastitis are examples of symptomatic homeopathy. Such prescriptions work well for simple problems. A case of chronic bronchitis, on the other hand, is not so simple. There is an underlying susceptibility that calls for a more sophisticated approach, which is often termed *constitutional* homeopathy.

Constitutional homeopathy takes into account not just one symptom, but every other sign and symptom that a patient has. The idea is that if a problem is systemic, it will be expressed in many aspects of the patient's physical and psychological being. A constitutional prescription, then, addresses not only the main complaint but the patient as a whole.

Conclusion

Homeopathy is an alternative to drugs, but not the equivalent. It is a different path, with a different destination. As one of my patients recently expressed, "Now that I see what homeopathy can do, I just want to keep on going!"

One of the best kept secrets in medicine is that almost any type of physical or emotional problem will benefit from homeopathic treatment. In my clinic, many kinds of diseases, some of them considered "incurable," have cleared up without recourse to antibiotics, steroids or other drugs. The list of conditions treated by my colleagues all over the world include almost every known pathology. As long as there is life, self-healing can occur.

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