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WHAT IS HOMEOPATHY?

Homeopathy is a system of medicine that is based on the Law of Similars. The truth of this law has been verified experimentally and clinically for the last 200 years.

Let's look at an example: If your child accidentally ingests certain poisons, you may be advised to administer Syrup of Ipecac to induce vomiting. Ipecac is derived from the root of a South American plant called *Ipecacuanha*. The name, in the native language, means "the plant by the road which makes you throw up." Eating the plant causes vomiting.

When a group of healthy volunteers took this substance to determine the effects of this drug, they found that the drug induced other symptoms as well. The mouth retained much saliva. The tongue was very clean. There was a cough so severe that it led to gagging and vomiting. There was incessant nausea. While it is expected that vomiting would usually relieve the nausea, this was not the case.

Such an experiment, using healthy volunteers, is called a *proving*, and it is the homeopath's source of information about the action of a drug.

Of what use could this plant be? If a person were suffering from a gagging cough after a cold, or a woman were experiencing morning sickness with incessant nausea that is not relieved by vomiting, then *Ipecacuanha*, administered in a minute dose, especially prepared by a homeopathic pharmacy in accordance with FDA approved guidelines, can allay the "similar" suffering.

Samuel Hahnemann described this principle by using a Latin phrase: *Similia Similibus Curentur*, which translates: "Let likes cure likes." It is a principle that has been known for centuries. Hahnemann developed the principle into a system of medicine called homeopathy, and it has been used successfully for the last 200 years.

HOW DOES HOMEOPATHY DIFFER FROM CONVENTIONAL MEDICINE?

How does the concept of homeopathy differ from that of conventional medicine? Very simply, homeopathy attempts to stimulate the body to recover itself. Let's look at an example: the common cough.

First, we must accept that all symptoms, no matter how uncomfortable they are, represent the body's attempt to restore itself to health. Instead of looking upon the symptoms as something wrong which must be set right, we see them as signs of the way the body is attempting to help itself. Instead of trying to stop the cough with suppressants, as conventional medicine does, a homeopath will give a remedy that will *cause* a cough in a healthy person, and thus stimulate the ill body to restore itself.

Second, we must look at the totality of the symptoms presented. We each experience a cough in our unique way. Yet conventional medicine acts as if all coughs were alike. It therefore offers a series of suppressive drugs something to suppress the cough, something to dry the mucus, something to lower the histamine level, something to ease falling asleep.

Homeopathy, on the other hand, looks for the one substance that will cause similar symptoms in a healthy person. The person with a cough characterized by being worse when breathing cold air, and sounding like a deep bark, will need a quite different remedy than the person whose cough is loose in the morning, dry in the evening, and better when sitting up in bed. We characterize both as "coughs" but they are different illnesses in the individuals, and therefore require different homeopathic treatment.

In conventional medical thought, health is seen simply as the absence of disease. You assume that you are healthy if there is nothing wrong with you. To a person versed in homeopathy, health is much more than that. A healthy person is a person who is free on all levels: physical, emotional, and mental. Obviously, a person with a broken leg is not free, on the physical level, to move around. But on a more subtle level, a person who cannot eat certain foods or is allergic to certain materials is also experiencing a lack of freedom. It is a good emotional release to cry at a "tear jerker" movie, but someone who continues to cry for several weeks afterwards is experiencing a lack of freedom on the emotional level. Likewise, a person who cannot absorb what he has read or cannot remember day to day appointments is experiencing a restriction on the mental level. The homeopath recognizes such limitations and attempts, through the use of the properly selected remedies, to restore the person to health and freedom.

An important basic difference exists between conventional medical therapy and homeopathy. In conventional therapy, the aim often is to control the illness through regular use of medical substances, even if the medication is nothing more than vitamins. If the medication is withdrawn, however, the person returns to illness. There has been no cure. A person who takes a pill for high blood pressure every day is not undergoing a cure but is only controlling the symptoms. Homeopathy's aim is the cure: "The complete restoration of perfect health," as Dr. Samuel Hahneman said.

WHAT ARE THE MEDICINES?

Homeopathic medicines are drug products made by homeopathic pharmacies in accordance with the processes described in the [Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the United States](#) the official manufacturing manual recognized by the FDA. The substances may be made from plants such as aconite, dandelion, plantain; from minerals such as iron phosphate, arsenic oxide, sodium chloride; from animals such as the venom of a number of poisonous snakes, or

the ink of the cuttlefish; or even from chemical drugs such as penicillin or streptomycin. These substances are diluted carefully until little of the original remains.

A plant substance, for example, is mixed in alcohol to obtain a tincture. One drop of the tincture is mixed with 99 drops of alcohol (to achieve a ratio of 1:100) and the mixture is strongly shaken. This shaking process is known as succussion. The final bottle is labeled as "1C." One drop of this 1C is then mixed with 100 drops of alcohol and the process is repeated to make a 2C. By the time the 3C is reached, the dilution is 1 part in 1 million! Small globules made from sugar are then saturated with the liquid dilution. These globules constitute the homeopathic medicine.

Although such infinitesimal quantities are considered by some to be no more than placebos, the clinical experience of homeopathy shows that the infinitesimal dose is effective: it works upon unconscious people and infants, and it even works on animals.

It is important to remember, however, that a medicine is homeopathic *only* if it is taken based upon the similar nature of the medicine to the illness. A medicine labeled as "homeopathic" will work only if it is *homeopathic* to the symptoms presented.

HOW ARE THE REMEDIES PRESCRIBED?

The selection of any homeopathic remedy is made on the totality of the symptoms presented by the patient. *Any* remedy may be used for *any* condition if the symptoms generated by the the remedy match the symptoms experienced by the patient.

There are several homeopathic remedies that may be considered in cases of colds and flu: *Aconite* or Wolf's bane, is thought of in any case in which the symptoms come on suddenly, especially if exposure to cold might be a causative factor. There could be a cough or sneezing, but the main guiding point is the suddenness of the onset. Mentally, the person is fearful - afraid he will die - he is overcome by the suddenness of the attack. A child, out playing in the snow, awakens screaming at 2 a.m. (a common time reference for this remedy) with a cough and high fever, or a man, out shoveling snow, suddenly comes down with a very high fever and is fearful he will die. Both cases call for *Aconite*.

Another remedy characterized by suddenness of onset is *Belladonna*, the deadly nightshade. The symptoms are characterized by redness and heat. The fever is high, the face is red, the pulse can be seen in the veins of the neck. The eyes are dilated. The person is very sensitive to slight movement and noise. Many old time doctors, when seeing a suspected case for *Belladonna*, would bump against the bed to see if the patient was sensitive to this slight movement. The patient is sometimes almost delirious and sees monsters. The throat is usually swollen, the glands are swollen, and the ear might be involved. For most children's earaches, *Belladonna* would be the first remedy of which one would think especially if the ache is throbbing and on the right side.