

# *Homeopathy: Classical & Contemporary*

## *The Origins of Homeopathy*

Homeopathy is a method of using a wide array of specially manufactured products that act powerfully upon the body to stimulate its ***natural defense system***. Conceptually, homeopathy is based on a few simple principles that have been well understood for thousands of years. I discuss these principles in detail in the paper titled [\*Vital Force\*](#). The significant innovation created by homeopathy's founder, Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, was his method of manufacturing the products used in homeopathic therapeutics.

The basic principle of homeopathic remedies is stated as “like cures like.” What is “like cures like”? The name Homeopathy comes from the Greek *omeos*, meaning “similar,” and *pathos*, meaning “suffering.” So, homeopathy means to “treat with something that produces an effect similar to the suffering.” Basically, that is, an illness can be treated by a substance capable of producing similar symptoms to those suffered by the patient. That’s a mouthful. I’ll provide clarification and examples of this later on, but first, let’s take a closer look at the history of homeopathy.

The credit for the proposal of the principle “like cures like” goes to the Greek physician Hippocrates, who lived in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC. Hippocrates is considered a seminal figure in the history of medicine because he was the first person to think that disease is the result of natural forces instead of divine influences. He believed that the patient’s own powers of healing are essential to choosing an appropriate cure. The basis of his recommendations encouraged therapeutics that stimulated the patient’s natural healing capacity.

As the centuries passed, new knowledge accumulated about the structure and function of the human body. Yet, knowledge about the nature of disease, in particular what caused it, remained firmly tied to mystical forces. Paracelsus (1493–1541) suggested that the causes of disease were limited to external forces, such as contaminated food and drink. Paracelsus also believed that plants and metals contained active ingredients that could be prescribed to match an illness. He also believed that a poisonous substance that causes disease, if given in very small doses, could also cure the disease. He, like Hippocrates, believed that the physician should stimulate the body’s own natural ability to heal itself.

Unfortunately, Paracelsus’s fellow physicians ignored his observations. The concept of “like cures like” did not gain popularity for another 300 years when homeopathy was founded.

From the years 1500 AD to 1800 AD medical knowledge in Europe increased rapidly. There was a significant emphasis on herbs during those years. And information began to flow-down to ordinary people as a result of the development of printing. Despite the growth of medical knowledge, the general health of the population slowly deteriorated as more people

moved to the crowded, dirty industrial cities. Standards of public hygiene declined. Medical practice became increasingly invasive with many physicians using heroic cures such as blood letting and purging. Patients were treated with extremely toxic materials such as arsenic, lead, and bismuth, which often shortened life.

It was against this background that homeopathy was born. The founder of homeopathy was Samuel Hahnemann who was born in Dresden, Germany, in 1755. Hahnemann studied chemistry and medicine and qualified as a medical doctor in 1779. Hahnemann protested vigorously against the harsh medical practices of the time, especially blood-letting, purging, and the use of massive doses of medicines that often had horrible side effects. He argued for improvements in public hygiene and advocated the importance of sensible eating, fresh air, exercise, and less cramped housing conditions.

Hahnemann became increasingly disillusioned with conventional medical practice. Eventually, he gave up the practice of medicine and began to work as a medical translator. During his work, Hahnemann came across writings about Peruvian bark, or chinchona, which was to change his life, as well as the lives of many people throughout the world.

### *The Discovery of the “Potentized” Homeopathic Remedy*

Previous medical research had indicated that quinine, a constituent of chinchona, was a good treatment for malaria. The author had argued that it was the astringent qualities of quinine that accounted for its medicinal effect. This made no sense to Hahnemann because, as a chemist, he knew of other more powerful astringents that had no effect on malaria.

He further investigated the effects of this drug by dosing himself with it for several days and recording his reactions in great detail. He was amazed to discover that he began to develop the symptoms of malaria, one after another, even though he did not actually have the malarial disease.

Hahnemann went on to treat himself with other common remedies of the day. He discovered that each drug or plant led him to develop symptoms and the symptoms were different for each plant or chemical source that he used. He also gave these drugs to others to see if they responded in a similar way. Hahnemann called these experimental tests “provings.”

After six years of conducting provings of many different substances, Hahnemann had created a large amount of research about the “drug pictures” for the many substances he tested. For the next stage of his work, he began to administer the drugs to sick people based on the similarity between the symptoms of the patient and the provings of the drug. Only when he prescribed the drug whose symptoms most closely matched the symptoms of the patient would he have a successful treatment.

Hahnemann had rediscovered the principal of “like cures like.” He published his first major work on the subject in the year 1796. In the year 1810, he published his collected principles in a book titled The Organon of Rational Medicine.

Some of the medicines used by Hahnemann were poisonous so he gave them to his patients in very small, dilute doses. Unfortunately, even these small, dilute doses seemed to worsen the patient's symptoms. Hahnemann called the worsening of symptoms "aggravations."

Because of aggravations, Hahnemann developed a two-step process for remedy preparation: first, he diluted each remedy, and second, he banged the remedy forcefully against a hard surface multiple times. He believed that by vigorously shaking a remedy, the energy of the substance would be released into the alcohol that he used to dilute it.

To his surprise the diluted medicines stopped producing such strong aggravations and yet seemed to act faster and more effectively at improving the patient's health than the more concentrated solutions he had initially used. Although they were now chemically weaker because of the dilution process, they were actually more potent in improving one's health!

Hahnemann, throughout his life, continued to experiment with many different diluted remedies. And as he continued to experiment, his manufacturing process led to the development of remedies that were so dilute that they no longer contained a single molecule of the original substance used to make them. During his lifetime Hahnemann proved over 100 homeopathic remedies.

This fact that there is no longer any chemical matter in the "potentized" remedy is the main argument that science has against homeopathic remedies today.

## *The Rapid Growth of Homeopathy*

During the 1800's, homeopathic philosophy spread rapidly throughout Hahnemann's home country of Germany, across Europe, through Asia, and then to the United States. Although many people in the medical profession disputed Hahnemann's ideas, homeopathy grew rapidly and became an established medical therapeutic tool throughout the world.

Two American physicians, Dr. Constantine Hering and Dr. James Tyler Kent, were important homeopaths who continued Hahnemann's work and added both new remedies and new ideas to the practice of homeopathy.

Dr. Hering's observations about the "process of healing" made a significant contribution to understanding the ways in which the remedies stimulated the body's natural healing force. He called these observations *The Laws of Cure*. There are three basic laws. The first is that symptoms move from the top of the body downward, from the inside to the outside, and from the most important organs to the least important. The second law states that a cure occurs in the reverse order from the most recent symptoms to the oldest symptoms. The third law states that a complete cure always terminates in some sort of skin eruption.

As homeopathy grew, many opinions developed about the best way to prescribe a homeopathic remedy. There were arguments about:

- 1) the strength of the potency, either a very high dilution (weak in chemical strength) or a low dilution,

- 2) the type of symptoms serving as the basis of the prescription,
- 3) the decision whether to prescribe primarily on physical symptoms or on emotional symptoms.

This led to a major split in homeopathic philosophy. In spite of the fact that homeopathy had become a very strong competitor of Orthodox medical treatment, the internal split in the practice of homeopathy severely crippled the movement.

## *The Rapid Decline and Resurgence of Homeopathy*

During the later 1800's and early 1900's, homeopathy's power significantly decreased as a result of an all-out attack by Orthodox Medicine. By the 1920's, homeopathy had been almost totally suppressed. In fact, during the early 1970's, it was very difficult to find anyone practicing homeopathy.

Since that time, there has been a significant resurgence in homeopathic therapeutics. The United States is not the only country experiencing rapid growth. England, Germany, France, and India, all have very strong homeopathic movements with very high percentages of the population using homeopathic remedies.

Today, the basis of the homeopathic system is still the Law of Similars as originally envisioned by Hippocrates. The truth of this law has been verified experimentally and clinically during 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 that 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 (a proving), they found that the drug induced other symptoms as well. The mouth retained 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 usually relieves the nausea, this was not the case. This experiment was a proving for Ipecacuanha and, as stated above, is the homeopath's source of information about the action of a drug.

## *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 heal itself. Let's look at an example: the common cough.

First, we must understand that all symptoms, no matter how uncomfortable they are, represent the body's attempt to restore itself to health. Instead of looking upon symptoms as something wrong, homeopathic philosophy sees them as signs that the body is attempting to help itself. This point is the key factor in delineating the philosophical differences between the homeopathic school and the current, mainstream allopathic school.

Instead of trying to stop the cough with suppressants, as conventional medicine does, a homeopath gives a remedy that *causes* a cough in a healthy person, thereby stimulating the ill body to restore itself to health; this is the principle of “like cures like.”

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 (no symptoms). To a person trained 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 afterward is experiencing a lack of freedom on the emotional level.

An important and fundamental difference exists between conventional medical therapy and homeopathy. In conventional therapy, the aim 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 their symptoms. Homeopathy’s aim is vibrant health: “The complete restoration of perfect health.”

## *What are the Medicines?*

Homeopathic medicines are drug products made by homeopathic pharmacies in accordance with 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 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 potency is reached, the dilution is 1 part in 1 million!

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.

## *History and Legal Status of Homeopathy in the United States*

Several European doctors imported the practice of Homeopathy to the United States in 1825. They educated other doctors in homeopathic practice. Slowly, schools were established

and a medical organization was formed. By the mid-1800's, several medical colleges taught homeopathy.

At the turn of the century there were 22 homeopathic medical colleges and one out of five doctors used homeopathy. But the move toward a mechanical model of the body and of disease pushed homeopathy into the background. By 1910 only 15 colleges remained. By the late 1940's, there were only a few places where the teaching of homeopathy occurred in the U.S.

The American Foundation for Homeopathy began to teach homeopathy as a post-graduate course for doctors in 1922, and the courses, now run by the National Center for Homeopathy, have continued to this day. The present day resurgence of homeopathy, fueled in part by graduates of the NCH course, is slowly bringing homeopathy back to its place in the medical care system in our country.

The manufacture and sale of homeopathic medicine are regulated by the Food and Drug Administration. The Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the United States was written into federal law in 1938 under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, making the manufacture and sale of homeopathic medicines legal in this country. Most are available without a prescription.

## *Forms of Modern-Day Homeopathy*

### *Classical Homeopathy*

Classical Homeopathy represents the predominant form of homeopathic prescribing used throughout the world today. In the classical method, the homeopath will engage the patient in an extended discussion about the patient's total symptom picture, including his physical, mental, and emotional symptoms. After analyzing the symptom picture, the homeopath will decide on what he believes to be the *one* remedy that matches the patient's symptom picture. The **key feature** of this method is the ***use of one remedy and one remedy only***.

Other practitioners practice a form of homeopathy called poly-pharmacy in which the practitioner prescribes multiple remedies. This form of homeopathic practice is very strong in France and Germany, although it can be found everywhere. Practitioners also weigh the importance of mental symptoms and physical symptoms differently. Dr. James Tyler Kent, the great American homeopath of the mid-1800's, elevated the mental symptoms to the higher rank and believed that this therapy should treat the whole individual rather than any particular set of symptoms.

It is very important to understand that homeopathic remedies, regardless of the school of thought, are prescribed on the basis of symptoms. Those who are strongly influenced by Kent, and some of his modern-day colleagues, believe that choosing a remedy specific to the mental symptoms will provide a more significant result, one that will improve both mental symptoms and physical symptoms simultaneously.

Many of the homeopathic products sold in health food stores and pharmacies today are combination remedies used to treat specific symptoms such as headache, colds, and intestinal discomfort. However, some workers in the field of homeopathy believe that symptom relief

treatment is no more effective than other symptom-based treatments in achieving improvement in individuals suffering from chronic conditions.

In his later years, Hahnemann moved away from the concept of treating on symptoms and began to base his practice on the treatment of what he believed was the underlying cause(s) of disease. During an intense twelve-year period, Hahnemann postulated a theory that every living person had been infected by three diseases that he called miasms. Hahnemann believed that these three inherited diseases led to a predisposition (a likelihood to contract) and a susceptibility (weakness) to becoming diseased. In a sense, this was Hahnemann's genetic theory of disease.

Few homeopathic practitioners have embraced Hahnemann's philosophy about miasms, and fewer yet practice miasmatic therapy. The basis, today, of homeopathic prescribing is, primarily, still upon the symptom picture.

## *Contemporary Homeopathy*

During the 1950's, many homeopathic practitioners observed that many of the classic homeopathic remedies were no longer working. From that observation a notion grew in many practitioners' minds that there was some blockage in the patient's body that prevented the healing action of the well-indicated homeopathic remedy.

The outgrowth of this observation led to two significant changes in homeopathic practice:

- 1) the development of electronic machines to assist the practitioner in deciding on the appropriate remedy,
- 2) the development of new remedies whose target was the blockages that were preventing the action of the well-indicated remedy.

This led to an exponential expansion of homeopathic therapeutics.

It is believed, today, by homeopaths working in this area, that the primary agents that block the action of the classical remedies include environmental pollution (heavy metals: lead, cadmium, mercury; and chemicals: pesticides, insecticides, herbicides, industrial), electromagnetic radiation, drugs and pharmacological interventions, and the inherited miasms as described by Hahnemann. Other significant factors include the shocks and traumas experienced by individuals during their lives, such as significant diseases, surgeries, accidents, and vaccinations. During the last two decades, many homeopathic remedies have been developed to address the blockages created by these different agents.

## *Modern-Day Scientific Methods Verify Homeopathy*

Another recent development is the application of the scientific method, through clinical trials, to study the effectiveness of homeopathic remedies. Recently, Dr. Wayne Jonas, of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Alternative Health, published a very significant study indicating that homeopathy was more than 80% percent effective in stimulating a release of toxins from the body and, consequently, in improving health. This study is the beginning of the focus upon the importance of the accumulation in the body of environmental pollutants and

their potentially damaging effects on health. Most of these damaging agents have been in the environment only since the time post-World War II years.

## *Nutraceuticals: Chemical Nutrients and Energetic Nutrients*

With the growing interest in natural healing products, such as vitamins, minerals, and herbs since the early 1970's, new and innovative ideas have evolved leading to an integration of homeopathy and other natural health-stimulating modalities.

A recent concept is the development of Homeopathic Nutraceuticals. A Nutraceutical is defined as a natural, nutritional product used by an individual to provide a therapeutic effect. Generally, Nutraceuticals are not essential nutrients required by the body every day, but are products that, when ingested, provide an additional stimulus to the improvement in health.

Since homeopathic remedies can be made from any type of substance, such as herbs and plants, vitamins, minerals, drugs, and environmental pollutants, it is totally logical to prepare nutritional supplements in homeopathic dilutions as described above. These can be ingested alone or taken at the same time with other nutritional products. This concept is consistent with new models of the multidimensional anatomy as described by Dr. William Tiller of Stanford University.

In the Tiller Model, nutritional supplements, herbs, and other *chemical*-based products stimulate the body at the level of chemistry. Homeopathic products, because they are diluted and potentized during the manufacturing process to a degree that removes any measurable chemical content are, by definition, dynamic and energetic. They are no longer in the chemical domain and they work at higher levels within the body's bio-electromagnetic fields in the multi-dimensional anatomy.

These are relatively new concepts, and it is very difficult for many scientists, medical doctors, and lay people to accept these ideas because our current paradigm is rooted in the physical and chemical body. For example, acupuncture, initially scorned by the NIH and other scientific and medical personnel when it first appeared in United States 25 years ago, has recently been accepted as an approved medical therapy by representatives of the NIH. It is now reimbursed by insurance payments!

In the future, we will experience a continuing growth and an embrace of these ideas and philosophies. Unfortunately, this movement will be fueled by the people and not by our highly trained mainstream scientists, medical practitioners, and institutions.

In summary, homeopathy is flourishing 200 years after its development. Energy-based healing modalities, which form the basic structure of homeopathy, are also expanding rapidly. Many people are realizing the great power inherent to the homeopathic philosophy in assisting people to improve their health, with no toxic side effects.

This is in significant contrast to therapeutics offered by pharmaceutical agents. Arguments between these different philosophies continue to rage concerning the causes of illness, loss of function, and disease. But, the tide is turning. The Germ Theory of Disease is

beginning to crumble, and newer (yet centuries old) philosophies are re-emerging to define health in our times.

The prevailing majority embraces the allopathic model of medicine; however, that is rapidly changing with the passing of the 20th century. The manufacture of modern-day homeopathic remedies is targeted to address many of the potentially health damaging effects of modern-day scourges, including environmental pollutants and the misuse and overuse of medicinal drugs. Another role for homeopathic remedies are as nutritional support to be used in conjunction with advanced nutritional programs. This wide range of uses will continue to expand during the next century.

### *Definitions of Homeopathic Terms (from Yasgur's Homeopathic Dictionary)*

1. **Isode:** (isotherapy) the employment of homeopathically prepared substances responsible for the disease itself. It is based on the concept of sameness, on the substance being identical to the causative agent.
2. **Drainage Remedies:** homeopathic remedies which promote the excretory functions of a particular organ or organ system. These remedies stimulate elimination, through natural channels, of accumulated toxins.
3. **Tautopathy:** a form of isotherapy, using homeopathically prepared pharmaceutical medicines in order to counteract side effects caused by that particular pharmaceutical medication. For example, giving a homeopathic preparation of DPT to counteract the ill effects produced by the DPT vaccination.
4. **Sarcode:** (organotherapy) the use of healthy glandular tissue extract made into a homeopathic remedy. When used it acts to support and/or restore normal function of the respective tissue or organ by stimulating its normal function.
5. **Nosode:** a potentized homeopathic remedy prepared from diseased tissue or the product of disease.
6. **Organotherapy:** the treatment of diseases by administering small quantities of organ extract derived from healthy animals. This stimulates the diseased organ to function in a normal or healthier way. Organotherapy had its origins in the late 1800s developed by Louis Hallion. His law states that extracts of the organ have a stimulating effect on that organ.