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A BRIEF SUMMARY OF HOMEOPATHY AND HOMEOPATHIC MEDICAL PRACTICE

What is Homeopathy?

Homeopathy is a medical pharmacotherapeutic system founded by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician, in the early 19th century. It is still practiced today, and the fact that increasing numbers of orthodox Western physicians are taking up homeopathy, in this modern age of science and technology, is a telling testimony to its validity, safety and effectiveness. In many major parts of the world today, homeopathic medicine has achieved substantial popularity and government support.

The goal of homeopathy is to restore the health of sick individuals *safely, gently and permanently*. The first step is to arrive at a very thorough understanding of what exactly constitutes the “disease” from which a person suffers. To accomplish this, the homeopathic physician conducts an extremely in-depth, comprehensive and time-intensive consultation in which not only are physical symptoms elicited and clearly defined, but also emotional, mental, social and constitutional factors which play an important role in the patient’s illness.

One of the greatest strengths of homeopathy is that it *views the patient as a whole person* and avoids the narrow, short-sighted specialization that characterizes much of orthodox, allopathic medicine.

What are homeopathic remedies?

Once the homeopathic physician acquires an intimate knowledge of the illness, he/she then attempts to treat the patient, when appropriate, by administering a single, select homeopathic medicine, called a ‘remedy,’ suited to the unique symptom patterns of the disease process in the individual. Where indicated, the doctor may also make specific recommendations about nutrition, exercise, lifestyle, etc. However, the primary focus of the system of homeopathic therapeutics is the prescription of the remedy whose effect is most similar to the totality of symptoms of the patient, called the *simillimum*.

Homeopathic remedies are prepared from a wide range of substances - animal, vegetable and mineral. Their preparation involves a procedure of serial dilution and succussion (vigorous vibration), a process called potentization; remedies are also known as potencies. Potentization allows the homeopath to prescribe medicines which possess an enhanced curative efficacy, essentially no toxic side effects and greater safety, quite in contrast to current orthodox, allopathic drugs.

What is the Law of Similars?

Homeopathy is truly distinguished from orthodox, allopathic medicine by the basic principle upon which the homeopathic physician selects the most indicated remedy. This time-honored natural law is discerned from *Similia Similibus Curantur*, or, translated from the Latin, “Let likes be cured by likes.”

In modern terms, the law states that a medicinal substance that can produce a specific set of symptoms in a healthy person, during an experimental clinical trial, can be used to cure a similar set of symptoms occurring naturally in a sick individual. In fact, the term homeopathy is derived from the Greek words *homoios* meaning similar and *pathos* meaning suffering, thus homeopathy is based on the Law of Similars.

What is the philosophy of homeopathy?

Homeopathy recognizes that all living organisms possess a natural intelligence that directs its life functions both in health and disease. When we fall ill as a result of some stress, be it dietary, traumatic, environmental, work-related, psychological or hereditary, our innate defense mechanism produces an array of symptoms unique and specific to our individuality. Such symptoms are an expression of the organism’s best effort to heal itself and overcome the influence of the stress.

For example, when we contract a cold, our defense mechanism may produce a fever, runny nose, sore throat, cough, etc., all designed to eliminate the offending virus from the body. That is, the inflammatory process in the nose and throat represent an activation of the immune system which destroys the invading pathogens. The production of excessive mucus and the propulsive cough reflex expel the products of infection out of the body and thereby help cleanse the organism.

In the homeopathic treatment of a cold, or any acute or chronic problem, a remedy is prescribed which is intended to enhance the organism’s own healing power. In this way, the disease is overcome safely, gently and completely and the overall vitality of the patient is strengthened. The ultimate goal of homeopathic medicine is the restoration of total health, which is experienced as freedom from limitation physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.

What can homeopathy treat?

A wide range of acute and/or chronic health problems fall within the province of homeopathic medicine, including infectious, immunologic, allergic, metabolic, gastrointestinal, respiratory, hormonal, menstrual, traumatic, neurological and psychological disorders. Homeopathy can be of help to patients of any age. Ask your homeopathic physician whether or not homeopathic treatment is appropriate for your condition.

Resources:

Organizations:

National Center for Homeopathy
801 North Fairfax St.
Suite 306
Alexandria, VA 22314
(703) 548-7790

*Ask for NCH Directory (for practitioners, pharmacies, study groups, resources)

International Foundation for Homeopathy
2366 Eastlake Ave. East
Suite 301
Seattle, WA 98101
(206) 324-8230

American Institute of Homeopathy (first national medical organization, founded 1844)
1585 Glencoe St.
Suite 44
Denver, CO 80220-1338
(303) 898-5477

Recommended Books:

The Consumer's Guide to Homeopathy, Dana Ullman, MPH [best beginner reference book]

Everybody's Guide to Homeopathic Medicines, Dana Ullman, MPH, and Stephen Cummings

Homeopathic Medicine at Home, Maesie Panos, MD, and Jane Heimlich

Homeopathy: Beyond Flat Earth Medicine, Timothy R. Dooley, N.D., M.D.

A New Model of Health and Disease, George Vithoulkas, MIH

The Science of Homeopathy, George Vithoulkas, MIH

Organon of Medicine (6th Edition), Samuel C. Hahnemann, MD

Homeopathic Science & Modern Medicine, Harris Coulter, PhD

Lectures on Homeopathic Philosophy, James T. Kent, MD

The Homeopathic Treatment of Children: Pediatric Constitutional Types, Paul Herscu, ND

Materia Medica with Repertory, Wm. Boericke, MD