

Materia medica

Asafoetida: An Excerpt from the Materia Medica Pura Project

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Abstract: The Materia Medica Pura Project is an international endeavor to update our materia medica and repertoires. Thus far over 100 remedy monographs have been prepared and the final goal is to complete close to 600. remedy monographs. Excerpts from the *Asafoetida* monograph are presented which include a portion of a new genius of the remedy and several cases from the old as well as modern homeopathic literature. One of the main themes of the remedy is within outward, which applies to the reverse peristalsis and the pains in various parts of the body. Also, the remedy is characterized by fetid discharges and painful carious ulcers which are sensitive to touch. Finally, the remedy is characterized by flatulent hysteria and wandering pains.

Keywords: Materia Medica Pura Project, Asafoetida, reverse peristalsis, carious ulcers, flatulent hysteria

Asafoetida (Asaf.)

Stinkasand, Stinking gum, Devil's dung.

Botanical Information

A *safoetida*, or *asafetida* (*Ferula assa-foetida*) is the dried latex (gum oleoresin) exuded from the living underground rhizome or tap root of several species of *Ferula*, which is a perennial herb growing to 1 to 2 meters high. *Ferula assafoetida* is in the family Umbelliferae, as the flowers which are pale greenish yellow are produced in large compound umbels. The species is native to the mountains of Afghanistan, and is mainly cultivated in nearby India. *Asafoetida* is a Latinized form of the Farsi/Persian *asa*, meaning, "resin", and the Latin *foetidus*, which means "smelling, fetid." This refers to its strong sulfurous odor. *Asafoetida* has a fetid smell, but in cooked dishes, it delivers a smooth flavor, reminiscent of leeks. All parts of the plant have the distinctive fetid smell.¹

In French it is known (among other names) as *merde du diable* (devil's feces). In some dialects of English, too, it was known as *devil's dung*. It is also known as *asant*, *food of the gods*, *giant fennel*, and *stinking gum*.

It was familiar in the early Mediterranean, having come by land across Iran. Though it is generally forgotten now in Europe, it is still widely used in India (commonly known there as *hing*). It was brought into Europe by a team involved in an expedition for Alexander the Great, who, after returning from a trip to northeastern Persia, thought they had found a plant almost identical to the famed *silphium* of Cyrene in North Africa—though less tasty. Fortunately it could be substituted for *silphium* in cooking because the true *silphium* of Cyrene became extinct, and *Asafoetida* became more popular amongst physicians, as

well as cooks.

The resin-like gum comes from the dried sap extracted from the stem and roots and is used as a spice. The resin is greyish-white when fresh but dries to a dark amber color. The *Asafoetida* resin is difficult to grate and was traditionally crushed between stones or with a hammer. Today, the most commonly available form is compounded *Asafoetida*, a fine powder containing 30% *Asafoetida* resin, along with rice flour and gum arabic.

Traditionally-ascribed Properties/Uses

Antiflatulent: *Asafoetida* reduces the growth of indigenous microflora in the gut, reducing flatulence. In the Jammu region of India, *Asafoetida* is used as a medicine for flatulence and constipation by 60% of locals.

A digestion aid: In Thailand and India, it is used to aid digestion and is smeared on the abdomen in an alcohol or water tincture known as *mahahing*. *Asafoetida* in this tincture form was evidently used in western medicine as a topical treatment for abdominal injuries during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Fighting influenza: *Asafoetida* was used in 1918 to fight the Spanish influenza pandemic. In 2009, researchers reported that the roots of *Asafoetida* produce natural antiviral drug compounds that demonstrated potency against the H1N1 virus in vitro and concluded that "sesquiterpene coumarins from *F. assa-foetida* may serve as promising lead compounds for new drug development against influenza A (H1N1) viral infec-

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tion”.

Remedy for asthma and bronchitis

An antimicrobial

A contraceptive/abortifacient: *Asafoetida* is related to (and considered an inferior substitute for) the ancient *Ferula* species *Silphium*.

Antiepileptic

*Antidote for opium*¹

Research

Two small (n=129), double-blind, randomized placebo controlled trials show that *Asafoetida* performed better than placebo for constipation-predominant irritable bowel syndrome at a two week follow up . One study was just below the 5% significance level, and the other was near the 1% significance level.²

History of Homeopathic Use

Asafoetida was introduced into homeopathy and first proven by Franz, in 1822. This proving included 326 symptoms from Hahnemann, Franz, Stapf, Gross and Gutmann . Their contributions, however, are not distinguished, and no information is given as to how the drug was taken . This proving can be found in Hughes and Stapf's *Archives*.

In 1829, a second proving was conducted by Jörg and his class (Jörg Materialien) using the crude drug.

In 1868, Lembke conducted a third proving with the crude substance . Lembke's reproving largely confirmed the symptoms from Franz's proving, especially with regard to the extremity, head and trunk pains . This proving did not however, develop the symptoms of flatulence and reverse peristalsis which feature so prominently in the *materia medica*.

The last proving of E W Berridge, was an accidental proving with ether and *Asafoetida*.³

So far, all provings have involved the use of crude doses . Thus, a modern proving with potencies, including medium and high, would be beneficial.

Asafoetida is one of the completed monographs of Gypser's group . Their references were checked and incorporated whenever possible.

Before making any additions, *Asafoetida* appeared in 2795 rubrics in the MMPP version of the Complete 4.5 repertory . After making all the additions from this lecture, *Asafoetida* now appears in 4893 rubrics . Thus, it was added to 2098 rubrics (many new, some existing), nearly doubling its representation in the repertory . Additionally, its grade was increased to 2 or 3 in many rubrics.

Genius

1) The first grand characteristic of this remedy is a general theme of *within outward*.

1a) This is best exemplified in the **reverse peristalsis** which is from within (stomach) outward (up the

esophagus). For example, we find:

· In the evening, a hysterical rising in the throat, as if a ball or large body ascended from the stomach to the esophagus, or even pharynx, obliging him repeatedly to attempt to swallow it, which relieved, but the sensation returned.

· Sensation of a ball rising in throat, causes difficulty in breathing. Globus hystericus.

· Sensation of pressure, as if a body or lump was ascending in throat, has to swallow frequently.

· Spasms of the esophagus, like that of hysteria.

· Hysteric rising in the esophagus.

· Sensations as if the peristaltic motion were reversed and, in the esophagus, were being driven from the stomach up towards the throat.

· A bursting feeling upwards, as though everything in the abdomen was coming out at the mouth.

· Food, when partially swallowed, returns into the mouth.

· Painful choking and belching up of rancid, acrid fluid, mixed with food.

· Distension of the stomach and bowels, with a feeling as if the peristaltic motions were reversed, with much spasmodic working in the esophagus.

· Pressing, cutting, stitching pains in spells, not regular, full of wind, pressing upward (never down), gulping up rancid fluid, constipation.

1b) Also, many of the pains are from *within outward*, for example:

· Flying stitch from within outward, in forehead, temples and sides of head.

· Pains in head seem to bore as if they extended from the bone to the surface.

· Pressive pain in the right side of the forehead from within outward .

· Pressure in the left temple, from within outward.

· Burning in the left eyeball, as from within outward .

· Extensive superficial ulceration of cornea, with burning, sticking or pressing pains, from within outward, rest and pressure relieve, also better in open air, numbness around eye.

· Stitching pains in the ears from within out .

· Boring sticking pain in left groin from within out, better from inspiration.

· Stitches extending from within outward, in both sides of the abdomen, while sitting, after eating; disappears on pressure.

· Sudden, jerk like, violent stitch from the right side, from within outward, toward the parietes (abdominal wall).

· Pressure in the left intercostal muscles, from within outward, which is worse during and expiration.

· Pressive pain in the right side of the chest, from within outward.

Asafoetida

·Stitches in chest from within outward. Whooping cough

·Single violent stitches from within outward, at short intervals, renewed when chest is touched.

·Boring sticking in the left loin, from within outward, disappears on inspiration and expiration.

·Stitches in the left shoulder joint from within outward.

·Pressive sticking in the right upper arm, on its inner surface from within outward.

·Boring pressure on the inner side of the left forearm from within outward.

·Sharp stitches from within outward in the right tibia.

1c) However, there can also be an **inward directed pain** as in the following headache symptoms with a peculiar **nail or plug sensation**:

·A sudden pain in the left temple, like an inward—pressing pointed plug.

·Pain as if a nail or plug was driven into brain.

·Intermitting pressing—inwards in the left temple, almost like a pushing inward.

·Pain in the right parietal bone, as from a deeply penetrating plug.

2) Another great characteristic of this remedy is part of its name which indicates a **fetid odor**. This offensive fetid odor is a characteristic of many of its discharges: the eructations, stools, flatus, urine, discharge from nose, breath, sweat, and discharges from ulcers. For example:

·Constant eructations of air having the taste and smell of garlic.

·Eructations: smelling like garlic, tasting rancid, sharp, or putrid, smelling like feces, tasting like carrion.

·Profuse, thick, papescient, brown, and very offensive stool.

·Blackish—brown, papescient, offensive stools, which relieve.

·Hard, dark, offensive stool.

·The urine smells strongly of the drug.

·Urine acrid and pungent, though lighter colored.

3) Which brings us to its third grand characteristic, a tendency to produce **sensitive ulcers** in many different places, especially over the tibia. The remedy's syphilitic nature is expressed by these ulcers, fistulous openings, necrosis and caries of the bones and by many of the complaints being **worse at night**.

This is a good example of the importance of clinical symptoms in homeopathy. In the provings only pains in the tibia were elicited. However, various practitioners extrapolated from this and cured cases began appearing showing it is useful for very painful ulcers and caries of the tibia (see cases 1 and 20) and in other places. After the reporting of many such cases, **painful ulcers and**

carious ulcers have become well recognized symptoms of this remedy.

3a) *Ulcers are so sensitive*, the softest kind of dressing hurts them and *light touch, even a short distance from the sore, causes acute suffering*.

·**Uterine ulcer, sensitive and painful, with offensive discharge.**

·Ulceration of the cervix uteri, the ulcers have high, hard edges, are *sensitive and painful*, and bleed if touched.

·**Pain in ulcer at night, almost unendurable.**

·*Dark red, hot swelling of the skin*; ulcers with thin, fetid, ichorous, bloody discharges; edges raised, hard, blue; ulcers deep, flat, with fistulous openings; ulcers affecting the bones; ulcers bright red, raw in appearance, covered with tenacious lymph; eruptions flat, painful; shooting pains in the ulcer.

·**Ulcers with extreme sensitiveness, patient flinches from even the softest dressing, or from near approach of any one.**

·**Ulcers with high, hard, bluish edges, sensitive to touch, easily bleeding, pus profuse, greenish, thin, offensive, even ichorous.**

·Old ulcers on forearm, wrist, hand, especially when affecting the bones, thin ichorous pus.

3b) Besides a tendency toward ulcers, there is a tendency toward **caries (i.e. necrosis) of the bone and gangrene**.

·Ulcers penetrating to bones, discharging thin, fetid ichor.

·**Caries of the forearm.**

·Swelling and caries of bones of feet.

·Ulcers turn black or become purple.

·Cold gangrene.

·*Black, gangrenous flesh above and below the ulcer.*

·*Necrosis of the tarsal bone.*

·**Necrosis of the right tibia.**

·Fistulous openings, necrosis and caries of the bones.

·**No longer tormented by the nightly syphilitic bone—pains**, but can again sleep under his feather—bed. *The apparently healthy portion of the tibia lying beneath the peculiar carious ulcer, became again sensitive and painful to the slightest touch, or even the approach of the finger, so also to the removal of the char pie, and at night also almost unendurable.*

·**Most extreme sensitiveness, in the vicinity of the carious ulcer of the tibia, of the superficial skin—sores, and also of the ulcer itself; the patient cries out if the finger touches a place distant from the ulcer; removal of char pie causes most severe pain.**

3c) The tendency toward **offensiveness and caries in bones** are found prominently in the ear and nose symptoms:

·*Discharge of fetid, green, purulent matter from nose*

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and ears.

· **Otorrhoea with offensive discharge and diseased bones.**

· *Offensive odor of the diseased bone, a white, watery, purulent discharge from the ear, deafness, aggravation at night.*

· **Offensive otorrhoea, with boring pains in mastoid bone.**

· **Mastoid disease with pain in temporal region with pushing out sensation.**

· Suppuration of the left ear with sharp shooting and violent throbbing, radiating pains with anorexia and sleeplessness, aggravation at 4 p.m. and all night.

· **Offensive discharge from nose, stench from nose.**

· **After mercury or in scrofula.**

· **Discharge of very offensive matter from nose, with caries of bones. Ozena.**

· *Catarrh extending to sinuses.*

· *Ozena for nine years; discharge from nose greenish yellow; very hard; sometimes very thin and watery and exceedingly offensive.*

3d) This wound sensitivity also extends to burns, for example:

· Ulceration from burns or scalds or other causes, with *great sensitiveness* to suffering, child *screams on seeing dressings prepared*, dreads and *shrinks from the approach of any one likely to touch sore.*

3e) And to *stump neuralgia after amputation:*

· *Neuralgia of stump* after amputation of thigh.

· *Neuralgia of the thigh stump*, characterized by **crushing pains, regularly worse at night, from dark till two a.m.**

4) Also, it is a remedy useful in **hysterical affections**, and has **wandering pains** and much **flatulence which is characterized by the above mentioned tendency to press upward.**

· With this hysterical nature, there is an intolerable hypersensitiveness to many external impressions: noise, touch, **mental excitement** are all sources of aggravation. This **hypersensitivity is physical as well as mental**, and is expressed physically by the *sensitive ulcers with offensive discharge* of the carious tibia and the uterus.

· **Hysteria, with much trouble about throat or esophagus, well—marked globus hystericus and burping, spasms of lungs, etc.**

· **Spasm of glottis, alternating with contraction of fingers and toes. Hysteria.**

· The hysterical nature of the patient is revealed in the telling of symptoms. Things of little consequence are magnified; he *fears paralysis or softening of the brain*, is restless, unable to concentrate on any one thing; low spirited, irritable, and if a woman, there is *alternate*

laughing and crying. With these mental states are associated the contractions of involuntary muscles mentioned above. A *ball rises in the throat*; it can be swallowed away but returns again. Or there is a sensation as if the *whole esophagus were being forced upwards*. *Flatulence* is nearly always a prominent feature of the case, and tends to *press upwards*, sometimes with such vehemence as to cause gasping for breath, and reflexly, occipital headache, vertigo, fainting, twitching of muscles, trembling, etc. Belching loud and violent, which usually affords relief. Gripping in the region of the navel, heat with a sensation as though the *intestines were knotted into a ball.*

· Hysteria worse evening.

· Hysteria, of the flatulent order.

· *Great distension of the abdomen, notwithstanding frequent discharges of flatus.*

· *After meals, flatulent distension* of abdomen, making heart beat very feebly, with faintness.

· Flatus accumulates in the abdomen and *pressing up* against the lungs, produces oppression of breathing and palpitation.

5) Besides the tendency to hysteria, there can be an *irritability mixed with indifference* as well as an *anxiety arising in the abdomen*. Also characteristic are the *low spirits with heart disease.*

· **Very irritable in disposition, and yet indifferent to everything.**

· Crossness and anxiety, which seem to come from abdomen, when he has a little difficulty in fixing his attention.

· *Fits of low spirits with heart symptoms, low—spirited between heart attacks*.

· With heart symptoms, fear of death.

· Hypochondriac or hysterical restlessness and anxiety.

· **Anxiety in the morning on waking.**

6) **There are ailments from suppressed eruptions or discharges.**

· Nervous disorders from *suppressed skin eruptions.*

· **Nervous affections after suppressed discharges.**

· *After repelled itch, was attacked with dizziness, unconsciousness, and permanent idiocy, attended with paroxysms of frightful anxiety, followed by mania and furor, to which some epilepsy was finally added.*

7) There are many reported cases of it helping *deficient milk in nursing women*, and occasionally *milk in a non pregnant woman* (i.e. galactorrhea) or a *newborn.*

· **Deficient of milk, with oversensitiveness.**

· *Agalactia occurs sooner with each subsequent pregnancy.*

· *Milk is thin, poor, bluish and scanty.*

· **Agalactia with tingling, creepy sensations in the breast, extremely nervous.**

*Asafoetida***Mammae turgid with milk, like in ninth month, without being pregnant.**

·Newborns with an inflamed mammary gland with secretion of milk.

8) Most complaints affect the **left side** (compare Lachesis and some of the snake poisons), although there are a fair number of symptoms affecting the right side as well.

The twitching and jerking are apt to involve the muscles of the left arm or leg; pain in the left side of the head; bleeding from the left nostril, etc. Some of the provers experienced *pain in the whole left side of the body*.

About midnight violent pains through left half of body, from top to toe.

·It affects the left side of abdomen, left hypochondrium, left side of neck and nape, left arm, left leg.

Cases

1. In 1818, on August 12, my wife, 40, of strong constitution, choleric temperament, and always well, was stung by a mosquito on the inner side of the lower part of her left leg, in the region of the shin. After several hours the spot was very much inflamed, and the foot swollen. She took a footbath of bran, after which she had great pain. The suffering part became more inflamed, the swelling increased, and extended half-way up the calf. The second day inflammation increased still more, and small pimples appeared here and there on the inflamed part, which were opened. The same evening these little pimples became ulcers. The ulcers did not heal, but, on the contrary, all formed one large ulcer. She was treated unsuccessfully for more than eighteen months. An experienced surgeon ordered a compress of wine and copper be applied. After the first application, the patient was almost driven to insanity by the pain, yet she bore it in the hope that her leg would be entirely healed. Under this treatment, a spreading ulcer, and at the same time the general health of the patient grew much worse. More doctors and treatments ensued but, alas, without any beneficial result.

As the patient had now borne her suffering with unequalled patience for six years, I resolved to treat her myself, homeopathically. On March 15, 1826, an accurate examination gave me the following symptoms: (Remember that *Asafoetida* was first proven in 1822 and thus it was not available when his wife first fell ill.)

She had a **large ulcer** two and a half inches long, one and a half inches broad, **with hard bluish edges**, on the inner side of the lower part of the tibia, with **visible caries of the bone**; **the least touch of the edges of the ulcer caused an unbearable pain**; a fetid, thin pus was discharged; **black, gangrenous flesh above and below the ulcer**; **cold swelling around the inner left ankle bone**; **extreme sensitiveness all around the caries**; **removing the lint or compress caused violent pain**; fine stitches in the left great toe; heaviness of the whole body; little sleep, full of dreams; **always at midnight violent pain in the left side, from the head to the**

great toe; fever; ill—humored, peevish, irritable mood.

I could not find a more fitting remedy for her case than *Asafoetida*.

On March 17, in the morning, I gave the patient one drop of the 6C of *Asafoetida* in a few grains of milk sugar.

On the 18th, the pain in the suffering part was somewhat lessened. The ulcer had a cleaner appearance, the edges grew softer, she felt a sensation of warmth in the suffering part, much pus was discharged, still fetid, swelling and inflammation lessened, and it was evident that a *little piece of the shin bone would separate*. The *pain in the whole left side, from the head to the inner ankle bone, increased about midnight*, removing the lint and dressing the leg was now attended by much less pain than formerly.

On the 21st, when dressing the leg, I could see a small part of the tibia covered with black specks; the ulcer was dressed twice a day with lukewarm water, and the poultice renewed every hour. The symptoms remained so until the 24th. *When the lint was removed, there came with it a small piece of bone corroded by caries* half an inch long and one—eighth of an inch broad. The ulcer was carefully washed with warm water, and I saw that a small piece of the tibia had come off. The ulcer now had a clean look, and it was certain that the disease would soon be cured. The smell of the pus had lessened; swelling, redness and hardness of the edges grew less, and one could see that the ulcer became smaller.

The general symptoms decreased from day to day, and on March 31 the patient could walk about the room without pain. On April 2, the hard edges of the ulcer, which grew small, and discharged little scentless pus, disappeared. The cure now advanced rapidly, the general complaints disappeared, and the patient gained strength. On April 21 the ulcer was entirely healed.

Two years have passed since then, and my wife is enjoying the best health, without feeling the least pain in her leg when the weather changes. In this way so serious a disease was cured in thirty six days by a small dose of the homeopathically indicated remedy, given in strict accordance with our law. A quick, swift, mild, and certain cure, where allopathic treatment, in the course of six and a half years, had done nothing to relieve, but, on the contrary, had aggravated the evil.⁴

(N. B. This case is very similar to a condition called pyoderma gangrenosum which often occurs after a minor trauma. "Patients with pyoderma gangrenosum usually describe the initial lesion as a bite reaction, with a small, red papule or pustule changing into a larger, ulcerative lesion. Often, patients give a history of a brown recluse or other spider bite, but they have no evidence that a spider actually caused the initial event."⁵

2. A healthy female, 21, found a decided *diminution of the milk* on the 6th week after her first confinement, so that her strong and healthy child could not obtain enough of nourishment. She was ordered tincture of *Asafoetida* 3, and after the use of this she continued to suckle her child to

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the ninth month .⁶

3. Breasts. Dr. Boas, in consequence of the application of *Asafoetida* plasters to the abdomen, has seen the *testes swell considerably, and the pudendum likewise become inflamed and swollen*. This inflammation became so violent in one case that he had to resort to antiphlogistic treatment; and, although the patient was a lady of fifty, and had ceased to menstruate long since, yet the *mammae became turgid and secreted a milky fluid*, as if she were in the ninth month of pregnancy. Dr. Kallenbach, a homeopathic practitioner, guided by this empirical experience, employed *Asafoetida* in several cases for the purpose of restoring or increasing the secretion of milk .⁷

4. A boy, after repelled itch, was attacked with dizziness, unconsciousness, and permanent idiocy, attended with paroxysms of frightful anxiety, followed by mania and furor, to which some epilepsy was finally added. The emulsion of *Asafoetida* was given, and the epilepsy soon ceased. At the end of eight days a phagadenic herpes broke out upon the legs, and his mind improved as the pustules filled up. In five or six weeks he was cured, with the exception of some weakness of memory, and remained well for more than two years after .⁸

5. Mrs. E W, 37, American, complains of *almost constant passage of flatus upward, without relief*; spasm of glottis, and sensation of a bone lying crosswise in the throat; gone feeling in the epigastrium at eleven a.m.; loss of sensation in the hands; both hands and feet very cold; a continued dread of death; will not go upon the streets alone; is often filled with the desire to do something dreadful; even thinks of murdering her children. Has no family troubles and is not obliged to work very hard. Has good food, but always feels worse after eating. Is nursing a baby of ten months, and is in the habit of drinking eight to ten cups of tea daily. I limited the amount of tea to three cups each day; ordered light lunch between meals and selected *Asafoetida* 200 as the remedy. A few doses of *Asafoetida* per week were given for a period of two months, with excellent results, all noted symptoms disappearing except the continual dread of death. This was removed later by a few doses of *Aconite* 200. At the end of three months the patient was discharged cured .⁹

6. Mr. W., 57, *ozena* for nine years; *discharge from nose greenish—yellow; very hard; sometimes very thin and watery and exceedingly offensive*; intervals of abatement, sometimes for a month or more; the discharge becoming thicker and not so offensive. *Pulsatilla* 3 did no good. *Aurum metallicum* 3, ditto, *Asafoetida* 3 cured.¹⁰

7. Tertiary syphilis in a man, 40. *Large ulcer upon the right leg with a bluish, hard edge, painful to the touch; nightly pains in the tibiae, bone very sensitive to touch.* *Nitricum acidum* 200 benefited him for a while. Afterward *Asafoetida* 200 cured.¹⁰

8. Amputation of the Thigh for Encephaloid. Hemorrhage controlled by Acupressure—one silver pin remaining in the stump. Ten months before amputation the tumor had been extirpated; it soon returned, growing rapidly; after amputation, hot water was freely applied to the wound; it is highly serviceable in controlling hemorrhage, and in favoring union by first intention. Acupressure was employed. Intense pain occurring when the patient awoke from chloroform was readily relieved by *Arnica* 300, in water, internally; one of the pins with its wire loop was left in the stump, by the breaking of the wire for withdrawing it; no injury resulted. *Neuralgia of the stump*, characterized by *crushing pains, regularly worse at night, from dark till two a.m.*, was permanently cured by *Asafoetida* 200.¹⁰

9. Whitlow, with violent, nightly pains and threatening necrosis of the phalanx, was quickly cured by *Asafoetida* 200.¹⁰

10. A Characteristic of *Asafoetida*. Apronounced characteristic of *Asafoetida* not generally known, is the following: “*A sensation of emptiness and weakness, with distension and throbbing in the stomach and in the abdomen together, attended with gurgling and rolling of wind, which is hardly ever passed downwards, but escapes upwards with loud and difficult eructation, giving relief.*” My attention to this symptom was riveted some fifteen years or so ago in a case in which *Argentum nitricum* had failed, but this remedy quickly cured. I would say, also, that *obstinate constipation* is very often associated with the aforesaid condition .¹¹

11. *Asafoetida* in Dyspnea Mrs. F, 40, has had much anxiety for several years; suffered from the following condition for three or four weeks past: spells of dyspnea; feels as if could not breathe deep enough to be satisfied; sits down and takes repeated deep inhalations till finally says: “There, now! I got it that time.” These attacks only during day and excited by exertion, or thinking about this condition, when the fear is excited that she will have a “spell,” and she does have it. *Relieved at night, and by forgetting herself.* Sleeps well. Condition of lungs and heart normal, and during the attack the air seems to enter all parts of the lungs. There is considerable flatulence, and some *relief of the dyspnea by eructation*. No rattling or expectoration follows the dyspnea. *Ignatia* and *Arsenicum album* in succession for a week gave no relief. Then *Asafoetida* cured the condition in twenty four hours .¹²

12. Asthma. Aman, 30, who was the pheasant hunter of a neighboring count, and who from his early childhood had been more or less afflicted with *scrofulous* disorders, and had a generally impressed scrofulous habit of body; this caused his asthmatic troubles, and from the fruitlessness of various treatments tried at different periods of time he had already quite despaired of any possibility of cure. The attacks appeared almost daily at the time when he sought

Asafoetida

my help. He sought me because I had successfully treated a friend of his afflicted with chronic asthma. *Every bodily exertion, every coition, but especially every rich meal, even every meal of which he partook to satiety, brought on his asthma.* After many remedies had been tried in vain, *Asafoetida* 9 first repeated twice, then four, five to seven times a day finally freed him completely from his attacks. A year later in consequence of several dietetic errors a moderate relapse occurred, but I succeeded in removing it by the same remedy.¹³

13. Baby, 18 months, was *severely burned in palms of hands* on April 28. Found her in much pain, and crying from that and the fright. Dressed the hands with dilute carbolic acid and gave internally *Opium* 200, with the result that she slept well all night. The hands did well till May 12, when one of them developed some exuberant granulations, for which the family used burnt alum, and then sent for me. I found a *raw ulcer, bleeding easily, black blood, edges elevated and indurated. Child very nervous, had not slept well for two nights. Crying at even the sight of bandages or the doctor.* *Asafoetida* 200 not only eased the nervous condition and allowed the child and the family to sleep, but started the ulcer along the road to rapid healing.¹⁴

14. Facial neuralgia. Facial neuralgia is one of the most difficult diseases to handle... Homoeopathy can cure countless diseases which are "absolutely incurable" from the orthodox point of view, and very frequently the right remedy may be chosen by the sufferer, if he studies the homoeopathic "Materia Medica" and is willing to do a little experimenting. I have been permitted to see a letter written by a well-known lady, addressed to the principal of an old-established and celebrated firm of homoeopathic chemists. She writes: "I have had the most extraordinary relief from *Asafoetida* 3 X, and would be glad to have a large bottle of the same medicine. I have had five years of everlasting face ache, and every kind of treatment and medicine had been tried with absolutely no result. At the end of a week with *Asafoetida* I was prepared to jump over the moon. This medicine should be given to any sufferer from *chronic pain in eyes, teeth and jawbones*, which doctors seem to know nothing about. This happened about six months ago. One of the most remarkable facts of many, consequent upon my treatment, is this, that I am now able to write and read a thing I have not been able to do for more than an hour for years without excruciating pain and this without glasses which were given to me to gain relief. "I am, "Very sincerely yours. "Mrs. L. B".

The chemist, in sending me this letter, wrote to me: "This certainly is a rather unusual remedy for facial neuralgia. The lady got the tip from Boericke's *Materia Medica*, in which she read the words, "*Orbital neuralgia, better pressure and rest.*" Occasionally a layman can cure homoeopathically diseases which no orthodox physician can cure. The lady took the medicine in the 3x strength. Of

course it must be borne in mind that *Asafoetida* will not cure all facial neuralgias but only those which show the same symptoms which *Asafoetida* has produced in provers who have experimented with the drug.¹⁵

15. Female, 29, Aug. 1, 1932, married. History of cystic degeneration of left ovary. Operated by a celebrated homeopathic surgeon in 1928. Her symptoms had been growing worse for the past six months. She was nervous, constipated, and suffered from flatulence, nausea, vomiting and pain during menstruation. Her physician discovered pathology of the right ovary and advised an operation. A close relative, a prominent homeopathic physician in his special field, sent her to me for homeopathic prescribing instead. I elicited sensitiveness of the right ovary on palpitation. She was very desirous of having a child, a longing that had never been fulfilled. I prescribed *Apis* 6 four times daily. She had no nausea, vomiting or other symptoms during the next menstrual period. I continued *Apis* intermittently. She grew better in every way. October 1, 1932. *Flatulence during the menses, with a sensation as if gas were coming up into the throat, and the feeling of a lump.* I prescribed *Asafoetida* 3 four times daily. All symptoms vanished rapidly. On March 23, 1933, she was delivered of a bouncing boy. She is in perfect health today.¹⁶

16. Syphilis and Rheumatism. A man, 22, has suffered from lumbago and rheumatism of right hip—joint due to syphilis, who placed himself under the treatment of an allopath who gave him several medicines but of no good. At last despairing of recovery came to my office on June 5. On enquiry I learned that he has used all sorts of mercurial preparations at the hand of the former doctor. The *pain increased at night and was relieved by pressure.* He was *very anxious. Ill humor, great disgust for food*, diarrhea sometimes painful, *distension of abdomen with feeling as if peristaltic action were reversed, relieved by passing flatus.* Frequent pain from place to place. Under the above circumstances I gave him *Asafoetida* 30, one drop dose thrice daily. After three days the bowels were all right. This was continued for a month, and he was cured. No complaint since then.¹⁷

17. Phillip, 8, consults for *asthma* which has so far defied all other therapies. The attacks he suffers are *sudden, intense, and slow to subside* under the different treatments attempted. On two occasions, he has even had lung problems serious enough to appear on X-rays. The mother tells me that *while he is sleeping, she sometimes hears gurgling noises coming from his stomach.* An X-ray of the passage from the esophagus through the stomach to the small intestine shows a massive reflux reaching the upper third of the esophagus. Allopathic treatment (Gaviscon) stops the asthma for six months—which is already enormous progress—but the attacks recur as soon as Phillip stops taking the syrup. After one dose of *Asafoetida* 15 CH, no new

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asthmatic attacks occur, and five years later, this child is doing very well . The remedy has only been repeated once, in 30 CH, when the mother again heard the gurgling sound while her son was sleeping.¹⁸

18. Geraldine, 2 months, is hospitalized after a close call with Sudden Infant Death Syndrome . Her parents found her one evening in her crib, inert, pale, not breathing . After being shaken a bit, the child came back to life . At the hospital, examinations confirm a gastro-esophageal reflux . This has not recurred since the child took one dose of *Asafoetida*. Finally, a small symptom of note which can help us discover *Asafoetida babies at birth: they often have an inflamed mammary gland with secretion of milk*, as do *Cyclamen* and *Tuberculinum* infants .¹⁸

19. An example of an *Asafoetida* woman:

Her partner commits suicide . After the first shock the wife starts swearing at him . She calls the police only hours later and doesn't go to the funeral. But she visits him every day at the cemetery and swears at him loudly . She is totally angry at him . One year after his death she comes to the consultation for belching.

Rubrics: Grief with anger. Contradictory symptoms. Eructations hysterical ¹⁹

20. Venous Stasis Ulcers of Ankle . J G, 75, is a recent widow who presented with anemia (hemoglobin of 6.5) and ankle pain due to bilateral venous stasis dermatitis and eventually ulcers . Her husband, a cardiovascular surgeon, died in August 2013 of lung cancer . During the two years that he was living with cancer, she neglected her own health. Her hemoglobin was 8.5 in July 2012 and 6.5 in February 2014 . In April of 2012, she had slurred speech while on vacation in Mexico which was diagnosed as a TIA, and she was placed on daily baby aspirin by her husband . When she initially presented to me on 3/14/14 she had ankle pain for the last month while going down the steps. This pain was better rubbing and hot bathing and did not change with the weather . She also has a history of asthma for which she takes an Advair inhaler once or twice daily. She has fall allergies and a history of nasal polyps. She is chilly and worse cold and wears sunglasses in the sun due to cataracts possibly. She is a night person (2). She prefers to sleep on her right side (1) and has an aversion to drafts (1). She craves chocolate (2). She is a calm person, sad at times and cries for no reason occasionally. She used to teach etiquette and believes that appearances matter a lot. She's affectionate and sympathetic and is still grieving her husband's death on 8/19/13 . On exam she cried when she spoke of her husband. She had severe thoraco-lumbar kyphoscoliosis, trace pretibial edema and a scab on the right medial ankle just anterior to the Achilles tendon. She took 2 pellets of *Lycopodium* 200 C on 3/14/14, and was told to stop the aspirin. The next day the leg pain increased particularly on the left, on the inside of

the ankle. The ankle pain persisted at a higher level after the remedy. The hemoglobin increased to 9 on 3/19/14, and then 11 on 4/11/14 and then 12.1 in May 2014 . On 4/14/14 a *painful venous ulcer* had opened on both medial ankles which required debridement . The pain was *unbearable* at first, a 10 out of 10, and the right ulcer was oozing . It was **painful around the ulcers** (2). On 4/14/14 she was given *Asafoetida* 30 C to take 2 pellets prn for pain.

On 5/5/14 she was doing much better with the ankle pain from the ulcers . She took the *Asafoetida* every 3-4 hours for two days, and stopped on the third day as the pain was gone. Before the remedy she had had daily pain for 2-3 months. The left medial malleolar ulcer has healed and the right one is healing and is quarter sized . She has restarted driving.

On 6/5/14 she is doing much better. The legs are much better and both ulcers have healed, the right one finally closing up 2 weeks ago . She has been taking the *Asafoetida* 30C about once a week for ankle pain, and doesn't complain of pain after the dose . The anemia is gone. She will continue the *Asafoetida* as needed for pain.²⁰

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Asafoetida

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