

Materia Medica Pura

Introduction to the Materia Medica Pura Project

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Our main materia medicas, Allen's *Encyclopedia of Pure Materia Medica* and Hering's *Guiding Symptoms of Our Materia Medica*, are more than one hundred and twenty five years old. The purpose of the Materia Medica Pura Project (MMPP) is to update our materia medicas and repertories for the top six hundred or so remedies.¹ There is an international team of homeopaths from Europe, the US, Canada, and South America working on this project.

Those who join the project are first asked to index the most important homeopathic journals, many of which are found online or in digital format. This helps one to appreciate the vastness and richness of the existing homeopathic literature, particularly journals from the golden years of homeopathy: the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries. The purpose of this indexing is partly to find interesting articles, but the most important aim is to sort out provings, toxicological reports, cured cases and clinical experiences from reliable sources.

Once a journal is indexed, the results are incorporated into a general index that is constantly expanding. This general index, along with a number of other indices of the old and modern homeopathic literature, forms one of the main data banks of the MMPP. Search engines such as Google Books are utilized and programs such as *ReferenceWorks* and *Encyclopaedia Homeopathica* are also searched to gather further information.

The first step in creating a remedy monograph is to assemble and read all the accumulated information on the remedy (provings, toxicological reports, cured cases and clinical experience) in chronological order, beginning with its original proving onward. The characteristic symptoms are then pasted in a document according to Hahnemann's schema—from above, down and inside, out. The work of Hahnemann is consulted first when the remedy is one he proved, followed by reference to subsequent publications such as Allen's *Encyclopedia*² and Hering's *Guiding Symptoms*.³ All cured cases and a reference list are placed at the end of the monograph and voilà, the greatest part of the work is done.

However, the monograph is far from being completed, as the most important part of the work now needs to be done. To facilitate its access to the busy practitioner, an

introduction is written, detailing the substance used to make this remedy, its history and any interesting anecdotes related to it. The monograph is then re-read line by line and every symptom is dissected in order to make repertory additions. This process consists of adding and upgrading the remedy to existing rubrics and/or adding new rubrics or subrubrics, where necessary.

Through this final process, the monograph author develops a deep understanding of the remedy—perceiving its trends, patterns and red threads. This knowledge is the basis for outlining the genius of the remedy. This “genius” becomes the most important part of the monograph—enabling the busy practitioner to seize in a few moments the most essential aspects of a remedy.

So far, our work has resulted in tens of thousands of reliable additions to the repertory, for just over one hundred remedies. Once in the repertory, in this case the MMPP version of the Complete 4.5, remedies can be found and considered for use in practice (with final reference to the remedy genius, of course).

Those who have compiled monographs have found that they are then able to see those remedies in practice and prescribe them successfully. This certainly has been my experience working on the *Asafoetida* monograph (a portion of which is featured in this issue of the AJHM). The knowledge I have gained in this work has allowed me to prescribe this remedy successfully for a difficult patient (as noted in the last case of this article). Those who read these monographs also notice more frequent and accurate prescriptions of these remedies.

References

1. Saine A. Materia Medica Pura Project. *AJHM*. 2010;103(3):146-148.
2. Allen T. *The Encyclopedia of Pure Materia Medica: A Record of the Positive Effects of Drugs upon the Healthy Human Organism*. New York: Boericke & Tafel; 1879.
3. Hering C. *Guiding Symptoms of our Materia Medica*. Vol 2. Philadelphia: American Homoeopathic Publishing Soc; 1891.