

WHAT IS HOMEOPATHY?

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Homeopathy is the art of healing par excellence. When homeopathy is well practiced, it is generally the medicine of choice to recover one's health.

Homeopathy is a scientific method of treatment which is based on the application of the law of similars. For thousands of years, man searched for a method to promote healing which is efficient, gentle and permanent. Samuel Hahnemann, a German physician who lived between 1755-1843, pursued this philosophical and scientific quest by developing an ideal system of therapeutics by bringing together a number of discoveries and reflections found throughout the history of medicine. After years of perfecting this therapeutic method, he called it homeopathy, by uniting two Greek roots, homoios meaning "similar," and pathos meaning "what one feels." Homeopathy consists of treating sick people with remedies which, in crude doses, would produce in healthy people symptoms similar (homoios) to those of the disease needed to be overcome.

Remedies used by homeopaths come from natural sources and are prepared in such a way that they are devoid of all chemical toxicity. In conventional medicine, drugs are generally given for their *effects* on the organism, while in homeopathy, a single remedy is given to provoke a *reaction* of the organism. This reaction is the healing reaction. Since only the living organism can heal itself, the homeopathic remedy is merely an influence used to provoke a reaction to bring about recovery. The greater the degree of similarity between the symptoms that are provoked by the remedy on a healthy person and the symptoms displayed by the person who is sick, the greater will be the recovery.

Generally speaking, people affected with chronic diseases do not expect their level of health to improve with the years when treated with conventional medicine. This is not the case with homeopathy because homeopathic treatment, in the majority of cases, directly targets the fundamental cause of the disease.

The fundamental cause of disease or the basic reason why a person becomes sick is their intrinsic susceptibility to be sick. In general, one can assert that disease is a state of imbalance resulting from the combination of several factors. To simplify, we can use three main groups to summarize these factors or causes: first, the general susceptibility of the individual to be sick, determined by heredity; second, the environment and all factors of stress; and third, the way one conducts his life which includes hygiene (diet, exercise and mental hygiene).

Years of experience enabled homeopathic physicians to confirm that in the great majority of cases, the fundamental cause of disease is the predisposition of the individual to be sick. The imbalance, which is the disease state, is in fact only the expression of this predisposition to be sick once the conjuncture of other factors has become favorable to its expression. With the most similar remedy (or in other words, the most homeopathic), the organism re-balances itself globally so that the tendency to be sick is greatly decreased. This explains the extraordinary result achieved by homeopathy!

The person who is afflicted with an acute disease (due to an infection, a poisoning, an accident, an emotional shock, etc.), or with a chronic disease (of psychological, emotional or physical nature), is in a state of imbalance which is unique to him. The role of the homeopathic

physician will be to gain all the symptoms associated with a general understanding of the patient to be able to find the remedy that will be the most specific for this individual in that state.

How does a visit to a homeopathic physician take place?

You will be asked to describe all your problems in detail as well as a complete description of everything that characterizes you, especially your feelings, sensations, sensitivity, psyche, and all that concerns your organism in terms of energy, sleep, appetite, digestion, etc. The homeopathic physician will complete this study with a physical examination. This thorough and initial interview requires approximately two to three hours. The better the homeopathic physician understands his patient and his problems, the better he can individualize to find the specific and most similar remedy for this patient's morbid condition.

This remedy will usually be administered in a single dose, once, until the next follow-up visit. During the follow-up visit, which generally takes place two to six weeks after the original consultation for people afflicted with chronic diseases and earlier in acute cases, the homeopathic physician will review all the changes which have occurred since the initial homeopathic remedy was taken. A follow-up visit lasts 20 to 30 minutes on the average, but can last up to 60 minutes. If the patient reacted favorably to the remedy, the homeopathic physician will choose the ideal time for the second dose. The remedy does not need to be given continually. It is not the remedy that heals. Only the life force within can heal. No treatment, no doctor, no acupuncture needle or homeopathic remedy can heal, only the life force. The right remedy triggers the healing response like a spark that triggers the furnace to go on. As long as the furnace is on, there is no need to respark it. As long as the patient improves, there is no need to redose. Redosing too quickly disturbs the healing process.

Which diseases can be treated with homeopathy?

This may sound strange but in homeopathy we do not treat diseases, but treat the person who is sick. Whether a person has a chronic or an acute disease, all of their symptoms, whether physical, mental or emotional form a whole representing a state of imbalance very specific to this individual. The goal of the physician is to recognize through the unique expression of symptoms of a patient the pattern of disturbed energy and identify among the great number of remedies available the one most homeopathic, or most similar to, the patient's disease.

Can a pregnant woman or a newborn baby benefit from homeopathy?

Since homeopathic remedies are devoid of all chemical toxicity, homeopathy is the ideal system of medicine for people of all ages, even the most sensitive like an expectant mother or a newborn baby. Difficulties during pregnancy and the delivery or its aftermath as well as all the problems experienced by the newborn can be dealt with very efficiently and without side effects with homeopathy.

How does homeopathy deal with patients affected with problems resulting from emotional trauma, severe grief, or the consequence of mood disorders such as anger, depression or anxiety?

As incredible as it may seem, all such emotional problems normalize with the application of the homeopathic remedy that is the most similar to the state of the patient. Patients who are already under psychotherapy find out as a rule that they recover far more rapidly after they begin homeopathic treatment.

How does homeopathy address patients with infectious diseases?

Homeopathic treatment is ideal to optimize the body's natural defenses against microbes. With the appropriate homeopathic treatment, people recover from infectious diseases, even the most serious ones, gently and rapidly. During past great epidemics such as diphtheria, scarlet fever, typhoid, cholera, yellow fever, malaria, etc., homeopathy decreased mortality by 10 to 30 times versus conventional medicine. During the infamous Spanish flu epidemic of 1918-19, it has been estimated that 25 to 50 million people died world wide. In the United States alone, 550,000 died, approximately 10% of the people afflicted with the flu. Homeopathic physicians documented then more than 62,000 patients treated with homeopathy resulting in a mortality of 0.7%. For people who were sick enough to be hospitalized, conventional medicine had a mortality of 30% while with 27,000 documented hospitalized cases, homeopathy was reporting a mortality of 1.05% (Journal of the American Institute of Homeopathy 1921; 13:1028-43).

Which conditions are outside the scope of homeopathy?

If a patient has a problem that necessitates a surgical intervention, the homeopathic physician will be the first to refer this patient to a surgeon. But as surgical interventions are a shock to the organism, homeopathic treatment will be ideal to prepare the patient for surgery and help them recover from the operation. Of course, cases with dislocation or fracture will be dealt with by an orthopedic doctor. For less serious mechanical physical problems, patients will be referred to a chiropractor, osteopath, massage therapist or other appropriate therapist. Generally, people afflicted with genetic, congenital, or fixed metabolic diseases or with very advanced degeneration cannot always expect full recovery, but more often a palliative relief with homeopathy, free of side effects usually expected when palliation is done with modern drugs.

With careful application of the law of similars homeopathy grows and evolves and yesterday's limits are continually pushed further back. Homeopathy makes the most of the organism's capacity to heal itself. The limits of homeopathy are in fact only those of the organism to heal itself, which are in fact extraordinary when put to work. With its truly scientific research, homeopathy continues to fully explore the greatly underestimated organism's capacity for self-healing (in an editorial of the British Medical Journal, it was reported that only 1% of articles published in the 30,000 biomedical journals in existence is scientifically sound. British Medical Journal, 1991; 303:798-9).

To achieve the greatest success, a homeopathic physician must undertake long and rigorous studies to understand the subtleties of the human being, whether healthy or sick, to be able to give a precise diagnosis before choosing the remedy that will restore the healing process. The better the physicians skill as a diagnostician, the greater will be his success.

What has been the position of conventional medicine towards homeopathy?

Since the beginning, conventional medicine has tried to halt the progress of homeopathy. At best, it accuses it of giving “placebos” despite double blind studies which demonstrate the absolutely undeniable efficacy of homeopathic treatments.

If homeopathy is so extraordinary, why is it not recognized universally?

Although homeopathy has been practiced for more than two hundred years, it is still in its early period of growth. It is probably the most difficult medical discipline to master because it is based on the pure observation of nature, and the strict application of a natural law. Until very recently, of all the physicians who had studied homeopathy, only a very small minority had succeeded in mastering this discipline. Today with the general disillusionment in conventional medicine, homeopathy is beginning to bloom again and spread throughout the world. People find in homeopathy a system of medicine that not only displays more common sense by its respect for the whole person, but which is also more efficient in restoring health to the sick since it optimizes the extraordinary innate self-healing powers of the organism. With the advent of modern communication, the teaching of homeopathy has improved and a better comprehension and practice of homeopathy has been observed in certain circles.

Homeopathic remedies are to be found in almost all pharmacies in Europe. At least 40% of the British population receives a homeopathic prescription every year and more than one third of the French are treated with homeopathy. Famous people that have used homeopathy include John D. Rockefeller (who lived 99 years), three American presidents, Mahatma Gandhi, Mark Twain, Samuel Morse, Sir Yehudi Meuhin, a great part of the aristocracy and European royalty (i.e. members of the British royal family such as the Queen mother, the present Queen Elizabeth II, her son Prince Charles) and a number of popes including Pius X and John Paul II.

In some countries, homeopathy is taught at universities and is recognized as official medicine. In Germany, by a mandate of the government, all medical students must now learn the basics of homeopathy. In other countries such as Canada, homeopathy has until now been reserved for the elite. In Montreal, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was formerly called the Montreal Homeopathic Hospital. In Toronto, the Princess Margaret Hospital was once a homeopathic hospital. In almost all pharmacies of Europe and Quebec, one can find a homeopathic department. In Chicago, there were at different times five homeopathic medical schools and various homeopathic hospitals.

One day, maybe in the near future, homeopathic medicine will be the most sought out medicine in the world because of its efficacy and gentleness. Choosing homeopathy for ourselves or our families should not be a question of belief, but a decision based on knowledge acquired through experience. One does not believe in homeopathy, one experiences it.