

# The specific characteristics of a homeopathic consultation<sup>☆</sup>



Jean-Lionel Bagot (MD) <sup>a,b,c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>General Practice surgery, 5, Place des Halles, 67000 Strasbourg, France

<sup>b</sup>Saint Vincent Hospital Group, Department of Integrative Medicine, Clinique Sainte Barbe, 29 rue du Faubourg National, 67000 Strasbourg, France

<sup>c</sup>Robertsau Radiotherapy Centre, Clinique Sainte Anne, 184 route de la Wantzenau, 67000 Strasbourg, France

Available online ScienceDirect 21 April 2018

## SUMMARY

A homeopathic consultation follows the same pattern as any other medical consultation. Respecting the similars and globality principles involves specific semiological elements. The different stages of the consultation are enriched by the discovery of symptoms which are not only useful for diagnosis but also necessary to a homeopathic prescription. Homeopathic semiology is not opposed to classical semiology; it complements it to the benefit of the patient as much as the physician. Because of its low cost, low toxicity and the absence of negative outcomes, a homeopathic prescription is in the interests of Public Health Expenditure. A modicum of knowledge of this therapeutic approach could be used to address patients' queries.

© 2018 Publié par Elsevier Masson SAS.

## INTRODUCTION

The reception of the patient, the in-depth interview, the clinical and para clinical examination, the advice on a healthy lifestyle and therapeutic education then the writing of the prescription form an integral part of the homeopathic consultation just as for any other medical consultation.

However, homeopathic semiology has peculiarities for the choice of treatment. The doctor must, in effect, respect the principle of similars which is the foundation of homeopathy. As for the globality principle, it requires the doctor to look for all the signs which the patient presents, including certain symptoms that have no apparent link with the pathology.

One can easily understand that this particular approach appears unusual and new. By describing the characteristics of homeopathic semiology during the different moments of the consultation, we will discover what makes the specificity and essence of homeopathic medical practice, as well as its pertinence in the current medical landscape.

## DEFINITION AND PREVALENCE OF HOMEOPATHY

Homeopathy is a therapeutic method which relies in particular on the principle of similarity (from the Greek homoios "similar" and pathos "disease"), that is to say cures by what is similar to the disease [1]. This definition, formulated by the French Ministry of Health, although incomplete, immediately brings to the fore the paradigm shift that a similarity therapy offers. Homeopathy, which uses medicines at very low or infinitesimal doses, based on the patient's individual reactions to the disease, is essentially based on the principle of similarity.

Nearly 30% French people use it regularly and 5,000 doctors prescribe it [2]. These figures are constantly and regularly increasing [3]. There are an estimated 500 million users in the world. With more than one hundred million people seeking homeopathic treatment from 250,000 homeopathic doctors, India is the country where this therapy is the most developed. They have 11,000 hospital beds dedicated to homeopathy [4].

## KEYWORDS

Homeopathic semiology  
Homeopathy  
Medical consultation

<sup>☆</sup>**Note from translator:** I have chosen to assume that patients were male unless the disease discussed made this unlikely or impossible. It is an arbitrary decision designed to avoid the clumsy use of s/he and his/her. Where it was practical to use inclusive language I have done so.

Correspondence to:  
5, Place des Halles, 67000  
Strasbourg, France.  
E-mail address:  
jlbagot@orange.fr

DOI of original article:  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.revhom.2018.03.024>

### The principle of similars or similarity

By choosing to call his new medical practice "homeopathy", Samuel Hahnemann, in 1796 immediately calls upon the specificity of this therapy, which is to treat like with like and not with its opposite [5]. *The law of similarity establishes that what can make one sick in high doses can cure at low doses* [1]. Let's take the example of the allergic reaction to a horsefly sting. The skin is red, hot and oedematous, the pain is hot and pungent, the application of a fresh compress relieves this pain. These are the same symptoms which can be felt after a bee sting. The similarity is perfect. In this case, an infinitesimal dose of bee extract, *Apis mellifica* 15c, should be prescribed, ie a dilution of  $1 \times 10^{-30}$ , three pills every hour until symptoms are improved. Even if the sting comes from another animal, there is no need to choose the identical, the similar is enough. What is important is the way the body reacted "as if it had been stung by a bee" which is the principle of similarity. An outbreak of urticaria, with rosy oedema, burning and sharp pruritus improved by cold applications, will also indicate the prescription of *Apis mellifica* 15c, even though, in this particular case, there was no insect bite.

Another lesser known example is that of potassium dichromate. Chronic exposure to this chemical toxicologically causes the formation of thick mucus in the upper airways of an exposed healthy subject. Administered in ultra-high dilution this same substance is able to thin and dry out similar secretions in congested patients. At any rate this is what has been shown in a randomised, double-blind, placebo-controlled prospective study published by the review CHEST [6]. This experiment was carried out on 50 patients in intensive care intubated for respiratory failure in the context of post-smoking superinfected COPD. The twice-daily sub-lingual administration of *Kalium bichromicum* 30c (that is to say a dilution, dynamisation at  $1 \times 10^{-60}$  of potassium dichromate) led to a significant reduction of secretions ( $p < 0.0001$ ), to faster extubation ( $p < 0.0001$ ) and an early exit from the resuscitation department (also  $p < 0.0001$ ). The clinical symptoms of these patients with superinfected COPD were "similar" to the clinical picture of potassium dichromate poisoning. This is the principle of similars or similarity. This study, which illustrates the principle of similarity, deserves to be reproduced on a larger number of cases, in multicentre, in order to increase its power.

### The principle of globality or individualisation

Homeopathy involves the person as a whole (physical, psychological, etc.) and not only symptoms related to the disease [1]. Each individual reacts differently to the same disease. This personal response reflects one's own reaction to an aggression or imbalance. The doctor will choose the homeopathic medicine based on the totality of the symptoms observed during the complete clinical examination of the patient. This is called individualisation.

In a way, there is no "one" medicine of acute otitis media (AMO), but "one" medicine for the specific symptoms developed by "this particular" child with AMO, chosen according to the particular modalities of pain, characteristics of fever, specific appearance of the eardrum, possible psychological changes, etc. [7]. This explains why homeopathic studies are more convincing when the methodology introduces the individualisation of the drug before randomisation [8]. Indeed,

Mathie's meta-analysis, published in 2014, focused exclusively on double-blind placebo-controlled studies randomised after individualisation of homeopathic treatment, shows the superiority of homeopathic treatment versus placebo with an odd ratio of 1,53, with, for the three most reliable tests, a OR at 1.98 (95% CI: 1.16 to 3.38) [9].

On the other hand, the recent meta-analysis of double-blind randomized homeopathic studies which do not take individualisation into account is weaker in its level of evidence with a low standardised mean difference of 0.16 [10].

In practice, especially in acute situations, individualisation is not always essential to choose the drug. This is the case in the example of the horsefly sting described above. It is also true of homeopathic complexes, combining several medicines, the therapeutic indication of which will depend more on the symptom than on the person.

### The principle of infinitesimality

*The remedies are prepared by successive dilutions of an active substance called "strain" or "stock", designated by its Latin name. The homeopathic strains come from the three great kingdoms: vegetable, mineral and animal. In order not to be toxic, these strains are diluted according to the Hahnemannian technique which is the most common (indicated by the letters D or DH at the tenth and C or CH at the hundredth) or according to the Korsakovian technique (indicated by the letter K). Each of the successive dilutions was followed by numerous succussions of the container in which it was carried out ("dynamisation")* [1]. If the successive dilution to the hundredth or tenth of the therapeutic substances used eliminates any toxicity, the product used, in order to become homeopathic, must also be "dynamised", that is to say, shaken a hundred times at each dilution, whether manually or mechanically. The experience of two centuries of practice has shown that in doing so, the therapeutic activity of the medicine developed with its dilution and its dynamisation.

But what remains in the high homeopathic dilutions since the Avogadro number is far exceeded and there are no longer any molecules?

Research work in fundamental physics, such as that of Jean-Louis Demangeat, using the study of the relaxation time in nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) gives us some answers. *High dilutions contain aqueous nanostructures formed by nucleation of nano bubbles produced during succussion around the solute molecule, which increase with each dilution/dynamisation* [11,12].

### MODE OF ACTION OF HOMEOPATHY

In a meta-analysis of randomised, double-blind studies published in the 1991 edition of the British Medical Journal, 81 of the 105 trials selected outperformed placebo [13]. The authors, 3 independent epidemiologists, concluded: *"The amount of positive evidence surprised us. On the basis of these results, we would easily accept that homeopathy could be effective if only the mechanism of action was more plausible."* These findings show the difficulty the scientific community has in accepting that a therapy whose mode of action we do not understand can be effective.

While basic research is beginning to reveal the composition of ultra-diluted homeopathic medicine [12,14], it must be

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/8693943>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/8693943>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)