

NOSODES AND PROPHYLAXIS

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Homœopathy is based on the fact that body is a living organism, vibrant with activity of a thousand and one varieties ; activities, moreover, capable of being influenced for good or ill by the right or the wrong kind of medicine and approach.

When a hostile agency of any kind enters the body, it calls forth a response on the part of the living tissues, cells and fluids which make up the body as a whole. This response is in the first place defensive, it being the fundamental instinct of life to preserve itself and maintain its rhythm and poise.

This response may or may not reach consciousness in the guise of symptoms, subjective sensations or distresses of which the individual is aware. In the early or initial stages of induced bodily disorder there may indeed be no awareness of anything amiss. But as soon as the responses are of such a nature or of such a degree as to cause conscious discomfort or distress then there may be said to be a state of dis-ease.

Actual changes in the cells and body fluids or actual damage to tissues accompany the disorder or develop as the illness progresses. Such changes are usually reversible and such damage is often reparable, especially if nature is aided in her curative endeavours and not hindered by ill-advised treatment aimed only at suppressing or abolishing symptoms as such.

HOSTILE AGENTS

The hostile agents which may induce a condition of disordered rhythm and disturbed function are of many kinds,—vegetable, mineral, animal, chemical poisons, or toxins of bacterial origin. The nature and degree of the disturbance brought about will depend on the toxicity of the substance on the one hand and on the vulnerability or otherwise of the individual body on the other.

Hahnemann discovered that the ability of the body to

mobilise its defence forces and resist hostile disease-agents is enhanced by the administration of small dose of a medicament which can, in different dosage, induce a similar type of response on the part of the body and produce a similar symptom-picture to that caused by the disease-agent. This in modern parlance may be spoken of as an antigenic effect, one which tends to evoke a defensive and curative reaction on the part of the body.

The fact that a drug, or any substance in nature or made by man, can induce a reaction in the body and in that way produce certain characteristic symptoms, means that according to the principle of similars this same substance can be used curatively when the same characteristic symptoms are present in disease. And this no matter how they have been caused.

Moreover this same principle can be applied on a preventive way to enhance the body's defences in relation to some infective disease which manifests a fairly constant symptom-picture.

The drug, venom or bacterial toxin which can produce this group of symptoms in poisonous dose may be used in attenuated form to bolster the body's resistance infection. It does this by, as it were, inducing the disease in a mild form and thus conferring a greater or lesser degree of acquired immunity.

In this way a small dose of the suitable remedy can enhance the body's defences without causing any symptoms at all, or with only a slight and transient degree of discomfort, which will vary from one person to another. Most effective for the purpose are the extremely minute doses prepared by a process of dilution and trituration or succussion to a high degree of subdivision.

These have been prepared from a wide range of potentially hostile substances,—plants, minerals, drugs, venoms, and infectious disease material of various types. In the latter case the remedy is prepared either from disease tissue which contains the bacterial poisons or from actual culture material which also contains the bacterial or viral toxins hostile to the body. Hahnemann was the first to make such preparations and he very aptly called them "nosodes" from the Greek word for disease, *nosos*.

NO RISK OF INFECTION

By the method used to prepare these potencies, the living bacteria or virus is, of course, destroyed (killed) very effectively and thereby rendered harmless as an infecting agent. Nevertheless, as with other medicaments, the process of potentisation so alters and attenuates the bacterial or viral toxins as to produce in the preparation a property which can stimulate the body's defences and afford protection from infection.

Such preparations are, of course, administered orally and this avoids the necessity for injections with their attendant disadvantages and risks.

They can be employed to advantage during an epidemic, and also in the protection of children or adults who have been in contact with others suffering from any contagious disease. Even if full protection is not conferred, an attack of the malady is likely to be less severe and of shorter duration than if such preventive measures had not been taken.

There is no hard and fast method for the use of potencies in prevention, and the length of time protection may last is, of course, difficult to estimate. One plan is to give three doses of a 30 c potency spread over a period of 24 hours. Repetition in the event of continuing danger of infection should be under the guidance of a homœopathic physician.

Under some circumstances the nosode preparations can be used curatively during the course of an illness. Their main uses are two, first in the role of prophylactics and second in clearing up the aftermath of an infectious illness when recovery is hanging fire.

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