

HOMŒOPATHY IS THE TREATMENT FOR 'FLU

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Influenza is "in the air" again, both literally and figuratively. Here is a disease in which homœopathy is the treatment, and where laymen can do a lot of good in their circle of family and friends by treating cases really early and so saving much loss of working time, and debility. The family doctor will have all the more time to devote to the really serious cases, but he must be called in without delay if the fever has gone on for a week, or if the case seems unusually grave or complicated.

During an epidemic ordinary influenza is pretty easy to diagnose, but there is always the chance that a graver diagnosis requiring different treatment, such as meningitis, might be missed.

It does not make much difference to the homœopathic prescriber whatever strain of virus is present—"A", "B", or Asian—as he takes the reaction of the patient for his guide to the remedy.

These reactive symptoms are nature's signals, on which the prescriber selects the most appropriate stimulus—the agent with power to cause a similar picture in a healthy person. Aspirin and similar fever-reducers and pain-killers are dangerous: they depress the vitality and at best prolong debility. A sharp fever for two or three days will burn out the virus more quickly. Moreover, for the homœopathic prescriber, drugs such as aspirin distort the symptom picture and make selection of the homœopathic remedy difficult.

Antibiotics Seldom Needed

Antibiotics are very seldom required. They are useless for the influenza virus and are only indicated for secondary complications due to septic germs. People with boils are at special risk here.

Any homœopathic remedy might be indicated for influenza,

and in convalescence close individualisation is often necessary to find the deeper stimulus needed to restore health. But in the acute early stages the likely remedies are relatively few. In a big epidemic, an "epidemic remedy" can sometimes be found—i.e. one which alone covers a large majority of the cases. The way to find it is to list the prominent symptoms of a series of cases and to work out a remedy which is closest to the composite symptom picture.

This epidemic remedy may change as time goes on, however, and as more graver cases appear. For instance BRYONIA might cover most cases in the first few weeks, but GELSEMIUM or BAPTISIA might supplant in later. When the epidemic remedy is known, it can be distributed freely as a prophylactic, and it can be prescribed for victims whose own symptoms do not clearly indicate a remedy.

With these points in mind, and ever mindful of the need to call the doctor if there is the least doubt about the diagnosis, let us now consider the commoner remedies for influenza. They will work in many different potencies but for general purposes the 200 centesimal is hard to beat. A few grains of the medicine should be dissolved in half a tumbler of water and a teaspoonful given every 4 hours for 2 or 3 days until the patient feels well.

If there is no obvious improvement in 12 hours, or in 6 hours for very acute cases—reconsider the choice. After all, we are none of us infallible. If you can't decide on a remedy from the symptoms available when you first see the victim, and if the epidemic remedy is not yet obvious, retake the case in 2 or 4 hours and meantime don't guess : give no medicine.

Aconitum

Sudden onset, high fever following chill from cold dry winds especially after sweating ; anxious restlessness, fear, variable red flush face, goes pale on rising ; face sometimes bluish, rapid forcible heart beats, dry painful cough.

Arsenicum Album

Extreme weakness from the start. Face flushed but later pale and haggard. Burning in throat or chest or abdomen yet

patient is very chilly. Extreme restlessness more nervous than physical, worse about 1 a.m. Persistent vomiting and diarrhoea. Fear of death, of being alone. Scanty acrid nasal discharge.

Baptisia

The face has a dark patchy flush, the dirty tongue is dry with a darker streak in the centre. The patient is confused, dull and lies curled up like a dog or slides down in bed. He complains of the bed being too hard and in his delirium imagines he is double or scattered or that another person is beside him. Vomiting and diarrhoea may be severe and the stools are dark and foul.

This remedy cures many bad cases but is not a panacea.

Belladonna

The onset is sudden, often in the afternoon. Face flushed, pupils widely dilated and bright. The patient is excited, even wild, and may strike, bite or roll head. Jerks in sleep. The fever is high and relapsing. Sleepy but can't sleep. The throat is red and dry. There may be hiccough. The severe headache is much worse from jarring or stooping, or light.

Bryonia

Like BAPTISIA, often lies curled up like a dog. The grand feature is the *aggravation from motion* hence the patient resents being examined, avoids the light, takes big drinks only at long intervals, and lies on the painful side to restrict movement of the inflamed parts.

The pains in head and chest are sharp and aggravated on moving or coughing. There is delirium of the day's work and he imagines he is away from home. Pains affect especially the head and the right lower chest (often with pleuro-pneumonia) but also there is much aching in the joints. The patient feels giddy and sick on attempting to sit up. The mouth and lips are dry and the dry hacking cough hurts chest and head. He must hold the painful parts.

Camphora

A drop of spirits of Camphor on sugar every 5 minutes is a traditional remedy for the chill at onset of flu., but this remedy in potency can also save desperate cases with sudden collapse.

and icy coldness of body and yet a *strange aversion to being covered*. This differentiates CAMPHOR from CARBO VEG. which has similar collapse but craves for aid and has much flatulence.

Cuprum Metallicum

Is similar to ARSENIC but adds violent cramping colic and cramps in hands and feet with bluish face and thin bloody discharge from nose and lungs. Grave cases who might die soon without CUPRUM. Violent suffocating spasms in the chest; cough worse from cold drinks.

Eupatorium Perfoliatum

Cures cases where the aching is felt in the bones and where this pain is excessive. There is vomiting of bile after drinking, and great thirst. Nausea. Sneezing, soreness of eyeballs, watering eyes, hacking cough and hoarseness.

Ferrum Phosphoricum

Is rather like a mixture of ACONITE and BELLADONNA, without ACONITE'S fear and less wild than BELLADONNA. There is a tendency to nosebleed, and to spitting of blood, and to sharp chest pains, and there may be suppuration from the middle ear. The fever tends to relapse.

Gelsemium

In some epidemics and in some localities, cures most of the cases but we must have the similar picture. The patient looks drowsy and flushed, the eyelids droop and he is slightly fuddled. The hand may tremble. The headache is mostly in the back of the head, like a band. The chills pass up and down the back and, strange to say, during fever there is no thirst. There is much pain on moving the eyes and the pulse is relatively slow.

Lachesis

Occasionally is needed, and for bad cases often in menopausal women. The keynotes are: left-sided complaints, aggravation after sleep, strangulation cough waking patient soon after falling asleep, sore throat worse from empty swallowing, especially on the left side and very tender to touch externally, bluish colour of inflamed parts.

Nux Vomica

During fever the NUX patient is intensely chilly and can't bear the least uncovering. (Don't confuse with ARSENIC : NUX does not have the fear and restlessness and prostration). The face is flushed, the patient is very irritable and backache is severe. There is frequent desire for stool but usually constipation. The early case will have a stuffy cold in the head worse in the warm room.

Opium

Cures some grave cases, rather like BAPTISIA but more chesty. The patient is hot, sweaty, sleepy, very ill but strangely uncomplaining. Like BRYONIA he imagines he is away from home and like ARNICA, that there is nothing wrong with him. In spite of semi-stupor, there is sometimes great, even painful, acuteness of hearing. It is of special value in old folks who fail to react to the infection, and who are obstinately constipated.

Phosphorus

It is a grand remedy for cases that begin with hoarseness and rapidly threaten pneumonia. The cough is hard and dry and much worse lying on the left side. There is nosebleed and bloody expectoration, the chest is tight and the patient is anxious and worse evenings. Great thirst for big cold drinks.

Pyrogenium

Suits serious septic cases. Restlessness is intense and there are icy chills and the pulse rate is out of proportion to the fever (usually pulse is excessively fast and sometimes the reverse—slow pulse with high fever).

Rhus Toxicodendron

Is similar to PYROGEN in its restlessness and sore aching all over especially in small of back. Change of position gives temporary relief. The thirst is like ARSENIC—for small frequent sips, and the tip of the tongue is red-tipped. A wetting is often the immediate cause of the illness.

Sulphur

This wonderful remedy is not usually indicated in the first days, but in some epidemics it might be frequently needed where there is irregular circulation. Hot head, flushes, red

lips, red ears, red eyelids, hot feet, chills running up the back. The patient is empty and hungry especially in the forenoon and feels a load on the chest. Septic complications, boils, tonsillitis and pneumonia, are apt to occur, and it is one of the best remedies when there has been no satisfactory reaction to earlier treatment.

Tuberculinum Bovinum

Like SULPHUR might be need in relapsing unsatisfactory cases. There is great changeability, restless weakness, pungent sweat and breathlessness. A family background of tuberculosis would be a pointer to TUB. Two or three doses are enough and then some other remedy should be watched for.

Veratrum Album

Comes in for a collapsed cold case like CARBO VEG. but the perspiration is excessive, especially on the forehead, and the vomiting and diarrhoea remarkably copious. The patient faints on rising.

Veratrum Viride

Has similar faintness and sweating but much greater congestion to the head and a dark red face. There is often a red streak down the centre of the tongue and a bad, sweetish taste. The thirst resembles PHOSPHORUS and so does the tendency to pneumonia.

Antimonium Tartaricum

If a patient is ill enough to require this remedy the doctor should have been sent for. The picture is one of desperate pneumonia in the last stages—there is coarse rattling respiration and a troublesome cough but the patient can't spit anything up. The patient is drowsy and the face bluish and covered with cold sweat. ANT. TART. suits old persons and infants well and I have seen a 10m restore an old man of 80 rapidly from pneumonia where death seemed inevitable.

Ipecacuanha

Has similar rattling in the chest with wheezing and *nausea* in early bronchitis, but the patient is not so ill as when ANT. TART. is needed, and the condition comes earlier in the disease.

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Because of its burning sensations, thoughts of death and early aging, I know now that I have often prescribed *Arsenicum album* when *Hydrastis* would have done better. *Kali bichromicum* and *Pulsatilla* also need to be differentiated.

Just recently I studied a gentleman who was seventy and critically ill. *Lycopodium* seemed indicated and it helped him to a point. Then *Tuberculinum* was prescribed and produced a terrific reaction. Afterwards, he was symptom-free but remained an emaciated, miserable wreck. After much exasperation, *Hydrastis* was utilized for its tonic properties. He not only recaptured his appetite and gained weight, but a post-nasal condition with a ropy discharge that he had had for so long that he forgot to include it in his symptom study, cleared up under the play of this remedy. Also, his hearing became more acute.

Since geriatrics is a ever-broadening field, as one of our best analogues of old age, I offer for your reconsideration, *Hydrastis canadensis*.

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With these remedies many cases of influenza can be successfully tackled. A small residue however will tax the resources of the most experienced doctor.

For the debility that so often follows—and which is less when the acute stage is quickly cured by homœopathy—remedies like ACIDUM PHOSPHORICUM, CAPSICUM, INFLUENZINUM, KALI CARBONICUM, PSORINUM, SCUTELLARIA, SULPHUR, TUBERCULINUM will require study. But that is another story.

—*Homœopathy, Sept., '57*