

FOUR CASES TREATED WITH RAUWOLFIA SERPENTINA

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There has been in the past, and at the present time there still exists, some diversity of thought and attitude relative to the scope of homœotherapeutics. On the one hand there has been the expression that "we possess in our *Materia Medica* an ample supply of medicinal elements with which we may meet the needs of any case which might confront us." A corollary to this has been the idea that we need not go further and instigate a proving of any new materials. In opposition to this theorem is the feeling that "any and all new medicinal agents should be accorded investigation and provings," with the idea that in any one of them we might discover a remedy which would be particularly applicable to the variables and the shifts in illnesses, which may have been developed because of the medications of more recent times. Occasionally one hears the expression of a belief that "each and all new drugs should receive a homœopathic scrutiny."

The last half-century of homœotherapeutics has been characterized by the almost complete absence of investigative impulse and the universal lack of any interest in either re-provings of remedies which we already possess or the establishment of any motivation toward research in connection with either newer drug possibilities or an amplification of our knowledge of the not-completely proven remedies, which we already possess.

This complacent state of affairs can seemingly only express a state of marked indifference toward improvement and progress in the mind of the individual physician, and would also seemingly indicate a certain smugness in that "what we already have is good enough for me." To me this attitude is a very large factor in fixing the responsibility for the present status of our therapy, and I feel that it is one important ingredient in precluding as active, progressive advancement of our belief and position.

True, there are many, many men who lack even a vestige of an interest in research, and from these, in the very nature of the man, one should not expect an enthusiastic backing for investigation. There are many others who are filled with such desire, who are ever curious as to what an unknown may contain, and it is to these men to whom we must look for newer developments and progress. The least that we might do is not to decry or belittle the ideas and opinions and efforts which may be presented by these inquisitive few. We should, rather be proud of their efforts and extend them our enthusiastic admiration, even though we may not be in position to equal their interest. We can also receive their summation and reports with an open mind and seek to apply their findings should a relevant case present itself. The investigation and provings and tables and charts which have been presented to us from time to time by Gutman, Stevenson, Hubbard, *et al*, are definite expressions of the fact that there is a forward step in our therapeutic approach, and it were well for all of us if we realize the value of these moves.

Determinations in the research field are based not only upon the findings of the investigators but by a substantiation of their findings by the men in the field of daily practice. It is not sufficient that we heard or read of these pronouncements, but that we put these findings to the test in our practice, and then, and most important of all, that we render our research men a report of our findings in the trial of the ideas which they advance. Whether it be one case or a half dozen or 50, each such report brings either confirmation or denial of the reported results, and thus is built up the volume of needed information.

In the May 1957 issue of the *Journal of the American Institute of Homœopathy*, William Gutman, M.D., presented a treatise and proving record of the then new drug, *Rauwolfia serpentina*.^{*} This presentation covered the picture of the drug's effects. In a later article (*J.A.I.H.*, 51:3-4, 41-42),[†] Gutman

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† Reprinted elsewhere in this issue.

presented a foreign proving of the drug. Perusal of these articles brought to mind the symptom peculiarities of some cases which the writer had been treating, and for these *Rauwolfia* was prescribed. It is with a desire to render some additions to the findings of the *Rauwolfia* drug that the following few cases are presented. As suggested by Dr. Gutman, the remedy was prescribed in the 200th centesimal potency. In this series of four cases, satisfactory results were obtained in three; one was unimproved and even sustained an aggravation.

Case 1—Mrs. N.M.P., aged 50, was a school teacher of tall, angular build; nervously tense, easily excitable and apprehensive, with occasional periods of depression. Her personality was not compatible with other members of the family. She feels better if she works hard. Early awakening mornings—something drives her out of bed. She has week-end headaches, worse left temple, as if a tight band were around head. Severe gnawing pain in left hip, posterior thigh and outer border of calf is aggravated when body weight is on left leg; stands with left knee flexed, body weight on right limb.

Rhus toxicodendron; *Spigelia*; *Hypericum* were prescribed without improvement. *Rauwolfia* 200., once daily for two doses, was followed by complete relief of pain in the extremity. The headaches materially improved. She sleeps well. Aloofness, moodiness and irritability are much better.

Case 2—J.G., a man, aged 64 has worked in water (in a milk plant) for years. For the past year has experienced severe pain in the sacroiliac area and down left sciatic nerve, with sense of muscle shortening. The pain is worse standing unless weight borne on right leg. Also worse mounting stairs. No pain while in bed at night. Unable to sit long at a time. Feels desperately tired and mentally exhausted. Hungry soon after eating, but has a feeling of distension after a few mouthfuls.

Dulcamara, *Natrum sulfuricum*, and *Lycopodium* were prescribed with but little or no improvement. *Rauwolfia* 200., once daily for 3 doses, then one dose weekly and placebo for 2 weeks were prescribed. Month-end report: Pain in back and left limb completely relieved.

Case 3—Miss A.R., a student, aged 18, two weeks ago had

a severe fall from a step-chair, striking on buttocks. Pains in lower extremities since, worse left leg. In standing must put left foot on stool or chair rung. Hates to step out with left foot. Pain, deep, along bone of left thigh. Walking up inclined ramp intensifies pain. Reacts to pain with irritability and fits of anger, contrary to her usual temperament. Since the fall, she has a desire to strain with urination.

Arnica, *Ledum*, *Hypericum* prescribed without benefit. *Rauwolfia* 200., once daily for 3 days, followed by placebo. Two weeks thereafter she reported complete relief.

Case 4—K.L.W., a male, aged 42, has a tall, heavy, muscular frame. He has driven a heavy truck for years. One year ago he developed severe pain in the left sciatic nerve, thought to come from the long hauls of his job. His hearty, amiable and cordial disposition changed to being irritable and curt. Sleepless toward daylight, must get out of bed. Can't lie on painful side. Mounts truck with right foot only. Weight on left leg makes him curse with pain. Pain better in hot bath, but worse afterward. Rest disturbed by dreams of accident with truck.

Rhus toxicodendron, *Spigelia*, *Ledum* were given without relief. *Rauwolfia* 200., every 8 hours for 3 doses made no impression on the pain in the left sciatic nerve. Two days later an aggravation occurred, with shortness of breath, tightness of chest and palpitation, followed by abdominal cramps and an offensive, watery diarrhoea with pallor and general weakness. *Camphora* 1M cleared the picture and offset the aggravation. *Hypericum* later cleared up the case.

General examination of all of the above reported cases revealed no temperature, no blood-pressure changes, no alterations in the blood picture, and no evidences of focal infection. Urinalyses were normal throughout. There was no oedema, no muscular atrophy, nor was there any restriction in function or mobility of parts involved.

A number of remedies seemed to correspond to the symptoms elicited. *Nux vomica*, *Natrum muriaticum*, *Rhus toxicodendron*.

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1. The ordinary endemic variety.
2. Para-'flu (related to paratyphoid).
3. Asian 'flu.

CONCLUSION

The incidence of these different varieties of influenza have naturally made it difficult to assess the full value of the nosode—although, of course, the same principle has been applied to combat a variety of diseases with proven success for very many years.

The summary of the reports collected by the B.H.A. is the result of field experiences which, although of great value, are not the only possible tests of the effectiveness of any vaccine.

The numbers involved are comparatively small, thus making the problem of a general analysis of the effectiveness of the nosode difficult. But nevertheless, in the light of this and previous homœopathic experience, any encouraging result in this sphere must surely indicate to the Government's medical authorities that they can ill afford to neglect this so promising line of development in combating this or any other scourge.

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codendron, Phosphorus, Arsenicum and Cuprum might demand differentiation from *Rauwolfia*.

The possibilities of any new remedy cannot be evaluated without a definite, consistent, and continued application in cases which seemingly indicate its use.

—*Journl. of the Am. Inst. of Homœopathy, Mar.-Apl., 1960.*